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ABSTRACT

This document is comprised of the 1997 issues of a quarterly newsletter of the Harvard Family Research Project, designed to share new ideas and experiences in evaluating systems reform and comprehensive child and family services. The first issue focuses on evaluation methodology and includes articles on the following topics: (1) mixing evaluation methods; (2) case study methodology; (3) learning organizations; (4) self-sufficiency assessment; and (5) automated information systems in community-based agencies. The second issue concerns the evaluation of school-linked services and includes articles on: (1) best practices in evaluation design and in evaluating outcomes, collaboration, and sustainability; (2) Vermont's goals and strategies for integrating education and social services; (3) using program staff perspectives in evaluation; (4) local use of data; (5) New Jersey's School-Based Youth Services Program; (6) Boston's Extended Services School; and (7) Communications for Child Protection Project. The third issue (combining numbers 3 and 4 for the year) deals with the evaluation of community-based initiatives (CBI) and includes articles on: (1) improving CBI evaluation practice; (2) implementing a theories of change evaluation; (3) neighborhood indicators; (4) learner-centered evaluation practice; and (5) the Kellogg Youth Initiative Partnerships. Each issue includes information on training opportunities/conferences and evaluation resources and updates on HFRP's research results. (KB)

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The Evaluation Exchange: Emerging Strategies in Evaluating Child and Family Services

From The Director's Desk

Volume III, Numbers 1- 4, 1997

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HARVARD FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT

THE EVALUATION EXCHANGE:

Emerging Strategies in Evaluating Child and Family Services

Volume III, Number 1 1997 — Free Quarterly Newsletter

From The Director's Desk

Heather B. Weiss
Director, HFRP

For those of us whose life-blood is evaluation, keeping up with the "latest and greatest" methodologies can be difficult. Since evaluation gained recognition as a discipline in the 1970s, the field has developed in response to both our growing knowledge as well as changes in the programs and policies that we seek to learn about.

We have come a long way from the experimental models that first guided our work. Since that time, we have developed approaches that have enabled us to look at programs more holistically, that incorporate participants in the design and conduct of studies, and that even help to build self-evaluative capacity. We have learned how to study large-scale categorical programs as well as more complex and integrated community-based ones. We have expanded the quantitative methods we use and have drawn from the disciplines of anthropology and sociology to gain new insights for qualitative research.

We first launched the *Evaluation Exchange* as a forum to help evaluation practitioners and others to share new ideas and experiences in evaluating systems reform and comprehensive child and family services. Over the past three years, we have highlighted work in the areas of family support, school-linked services, results-based accountability, and community-based initiatives. While evaluation methodology has been an undercurrent in all our issues, in this first issue for 1997, we focus more explicitly on this topic. In our "Theory and Practice" section, we focus on a particularly contentious issue in evaluation – that of mixing methods. Jennifer Greene, who has worked extensively in this area, sets forth a new framework for mixing evaluative approaches that promises to move us beyond the discussions of paradigms that have mired us in controversy in the past. In "Promising Practices," HFRP researcher Julia Coffman reminds us that ideas outside our discipline also have relevance for us, among them that of "learning organizations," which has come to be used frequently in the private sector. Included in this article are citations for a number of publications about this important and growing field. In "Questions and Answers," Robert Yin, author of *Case study research* and *Applications of case study research*, answers some of our questions about applying case study methodology to the evaluation of comprehensive and collaborative community-based initiatives. As our field evolves, particularly with the focus on accountability these days, management information has become an important aspect of evaluation and program practice. In our "Spotlight" section, Susan Blank of the Foundation for Child Development presents some of her observations from a recent study she conducted of MIS development and use in community-based agencies. In our last issue of the *Evaluation Exchange*, we discussed the struggle that many community-based organizations face in trying to evaluate client experience with comprehensive rather than categorical programs. Our

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"Evaluations to Watch" section features Maurice Lim Miller, who discusses an evaluation instrument for self-sufficiency that he developed and is using in San Francisco. Finally, while an exhaustive list of new books and publications on evaluation methodology would fill several newsletters, we have included a few in our "New and Noteworthy" section.

In the current climate of shrinking public resources and a generally cynical view of government programs, policymakers and program practitioners will continue to look to evaluators for insights about what works. And we will be challenged to refine our craft such that we can continue to make a contribution.

In closing, I would like to introduce our new *Evaluation Exchange* team: Ann Hannum, our new co-editor and publications coordinator; Karen Horsch, our co-editor and evaluation research specialist; and Caroline Schaefer, our research assistant. ◆

Call for Resumes

The Harvard Family Research Project anticipates openings for talented senior- and junior-level professionals with experience and training in evaluation and policy related to child and family services. These professionals will play a vital role in HFRP's mission to build the family support field's capacity for evaluation and documentation, and to generate information that will result in better services for children and families.

The positions will involve research on family support initiatives and evaluations. Individuals must demonstrate a knowledge of evaluation/research planning and management, qualitative and quantitative methods and analysis, technical assistance, and outcomes measurement. They must have superior communication, coordination, analytic, and writing skills. Technical assistance in evaluation, writing policy reports, and assisting in grant proposal development may be required.

For anticipated senior-level openings, Ph.D. in relevant field (e.g. social sciences, human services, government, public health) required, with approximately 5 years related experience. For anticipated junior-level openings, M.A. required, with approximately 1-3 years experience.

If you are interested, please send a resume/cover letter to (no phone, fax, or e-mail replies please):

Associate Director for Administration/EE
Harvard Family Research Project
38 Concord Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02138

THEORY AND PRACTICE

Advancing Mixed-Method Evaluation

Evaluation theory and practice today are characteristically pluralistic, embracing diverse perspectives, methods, data, and values within and across studies, toward the generation of more insightful and meaningful evaluative claims. Yet traditionally, mixed-method work has concentrated on the technical level, focusing on combining qualitative and quantitative methods within one evaluation study. This article strengthens the promise of pluralistic evaluation by advancing an enhanced conceptual framework that extends beyond the technical level for planning and implementing mixed-method evaluation studies.

When planning an effective and defensible mixed-method evaluation design, one must consider three levels: the political level, which includes the purpose and role of evaluation; the paradigm level, which incorporates assumptions about the social world and our ability to know it; and the technical level, which represents discrete methods and procedures for gathering and analyzing data. It is at the paradigm level where the greatest controversy over mixing methods arises. Paradigms serve as the philosophical "anchor" of social inquiry, providing the framework within which are grounded assumptions about knowledge, our social world, and our role as evaluators in it. These include, for example, assumptions regarding the objectivity or subjectivity of knowledge claims and the realism or relativism of our social worlds.

The current mixed-method conversation consists primarily of three stances on the sensibility of mixing paradigms while mixing methods in evaluative inquiry: (1) the *purist* stance, whose adherents argue against the sensibility of mixing paradigms; (2) the *pragmatic* stance, in which paradigms are viewed as useful conceptual constructions but of little value in guiding practice, and in which methodological decisions should be made to maximize contextual responsiveness; and (3) the *dialectic* stance, in which paradigms are viewed as important frameworks for inquiry practice, and the inevitable tensions invoked by juxtaposing different paradigms are viewed as potentially generating more complete, more insightful, even more revisioned or transformed evaluative understandings.

Past discussions about mixing methods demonstrate clearly that focusing on the philosophical differences between evaluation approaches mires us in controversy. If we as evaluators wish to maximize the possibilities in intentionally using multiple methodologies, we must shift the mixed-method conversation away from a preoccupation with explicit assumptive differences among paradigms and toward other characteristics of social inquiry traditions. This is not to say that philosophical underpinnings should be eschewed; indeed, each paradigm offers a meaningful and legitimate way of knowing and understanding. Rather, the argument here is for a middle ground and a balance between philosophy and methodology, between paradigms and practice. There is a need to focus on characteristics that define the different inquiry traditions and therefore warrant our attention and respect, but also that are not logically irreconcilable when juxtaposed with contrasting characteristics.

One such characteristic is that of *knowledge claims* generated by different traditions. For example, concepts such as closeness and distance, particularity and generality, and meaning and causality are characteristically advanced by the traditions of interpretivism and postpositivism, respectively, and are not necessarily logically incompatible. A mixed-method design combining these two traditions would strive for knowledge claims that are grounded in the lives of the participants studied and that also have some generality to other participants and other contexts; that enhance understanding of both the unusual and the typical case; that isolate factors of particular significance while also integrating the whole; and that are full of emic meaning at the same time that they offer causal connections of broader significance. Such a study pro-

duces results that are potentially more useful and relevant.

An alternative set of characteristics that may productively advance the mixed-method conversation are the *different values and interests* advanced by different methodological traditions. For example, postpositivism characteristically advances values of efficiency and utilitarianism; interpretivism characteristically promotes values of diversity and community. A mixed-method approach would focus on the value-based and action-oriented dimensions of each of the different inquiry traditions and become the grounds on which methods and analysis decisions were made. An evaluation focusing on these areas represents a greater plurality of interests, voices, and perspectives, and offers a potentially more constructive dialogue among different evaluation traditions.

Two design alternatives that may effectively combine the critical features of different traditions are component and integrated designs. In component designs, the different methods remain discrete throughout the inquiry, so that the combining of methods is conducted at the level of interpretation and inference. Three specific examples of component designs that build directly from earlier work on mixed-method purposes are triangulation, complementarity, and expansion. Triangulation has typically entailed the use of different methods, each with offsetting biases, to assess a given phenomenon. However, this same logic can be applied to inquirer bias, bias of substantive theory, and bias of inquiry context. Complementarity designs are those in which results from one method-type are enhanced or clarified by results from another method-type, both within a single inquiry framework and across different inquiry frameworks. Expansion designs rely on different inquiry frameworks and methods for different inquiry components and bring them together in a side-by-side fashion.

Integrated mixed-method designs attain greater integration of the different method types during the inquiry and analytic processes. Examples of such designs include iterative, embedded or nested, holistic, and transformative designs. Iterative designs are characterized by a dynamic and ongoing interplay over time among the different methodologies. Methods are employed in multiple iterations such that findings and interpretations are developed at increasing levels of sophistication. Embedded designs join one methodology within a different methodology – for example, an ethnographic study within a quasi-experimental framework. In holistic integration, there is a simultaneity of the mix of methods which offers a synthesis of perspectives, of understandings and insights reached, and of study results and conclusions. The transforming design takes into consideration the value-based and action-oriented dimensions of the different inquiry traditions and emphasizes the plurality of interests. By infusing values and political dimensions into the evaluative inquiry, these designs are intentionally pluralistic.

> The challenge... is to make methods choices that are philosophically defensible and, at the same time, contextually practical and responsive.

Discussions and debates about assumptive differences among evaluative paradigms will continue. Each paradigm offers a meaningful and legitimate way of knowing and understanding and orients us in the world of inquiry, but each is also limited. The challenge for us as evaluators is to make methods choices that are philosophically defensible and, at the same time, contextually practical and responsive. Mixed methods have the potential of enabling us to understand more fully, to generate insights that are deeper and broader, and to develop important knowledge claims that respect a wider range of interests and perspectives. They offer significant potential in enabling us to understand better the complex social phenomena which we now face. ◆

Jennifer C. Greene
Associate Professor,
Cornell University

This article is adapted with permission from an upcoming issue of New Directions for Evaluation, *by Jossey-Bass, Inc., Publishers, to be published in July 1997. The issue focuses on mixed-method design in evaluation and will include articles on parameters for making methods decisions, analyses of mixed methods studies, discussions of paradigms, and examples of mixed-method designs. For more information or to order, call (800) 956-7739.*

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Interview with Robert K. Yin

Robert K. Yin is President of COSMOS Corporation, an evaluation research firm based in Bethesda, Maryland. Dr. Yin's extensive publications on case study methodology include *Case study research* and *Applications of case study research*. COSMOS is currently using case study methodology in three of four of its evaluations of community-based collaborative initiatives. We asked Dr. Yin to share with us some of his insights about the use of case study methodology in evaluating such initiatives.

(1) How can case study methodology be used to study the effectiveness of comprehensive and collaborative community-based initiatives?

As evaluators of program effectiveness, we are often faced with the challenge of identifying why and how interventions lead to observed results or outcomes. Case study methodology, by investigating phenomena in their real-life context, can be a very important tool in opening the "black box" of how interventions and program effectiveness are linked. This is an advantage over traditional experimental and quasi-experimental designs which may measure outcomes and some process variables but fall short in dealing with the dynamic that is inherent in community-based collaborative initiatives.

Our case study work uses a tool called the "logic model." The logic model outlines the cause and effect steps that link interventions with expected outcomes. It thus lays out the mystery of the "black box" as a set of linkages and hypotheses about how a collaborative really works. These hypotheses can then be "tested" using both quantitative and qualitative data.

The logic model concept is not new, as it was first used in evaluability assessment. However, we are using this approach to address one of the perennial challenges evaluators face – determining causality. We use the logic model also to help us identify conflicting models, or rival hypotheses, to use the traditional evaluation term. In traditional evaluation designs, comparison and control groups are used to establish causality. In community-based initiatives, however, it is virtually impossible to identify comparisons, much less control groups. We use the logic model to help us identify alternative hypotheses about both processes and outcomes and collect data on these as well. We recognize that this approach does not lead to results having the same level of certainty as the perfect experiment, but it can help us to begin to pick things apart and understand what is going on in these very complex initiatives.

(2) What role can the case study evaluator play in providing formative input to community-based initiatives?

The logic model, as we apply it, facilitates a participatory approach. We believe everyone's practice is based on a theory about how things work. The logic model enables practitioners to get these theories, as well as rivals, out in the open. Such an approach may reveal that a theory is flawed, that there are gaps in interventions and what they are expected to yield. This exercise thus helps to build a better theoretical model. We use evaluation workshops and include the evaluators, project director, and staff in the development of the model. We find as well that this process serves an important program development function. This process enables us to refine the theories as we learn more about them and can also make evaluation a better experience.

While there might be concerns about the objectivity of results that come from a more participatory evaluation, I think that there is an increasing yielding of the idea of the distant third-party evaluator. However, the participatory approach should not be seen as corrupting the evaluator's role. Although the evaluator interacts more with those involved in a program, he/she is committed to collect all relevant data and make conclusions on that basis. The participation of others in the process early on helps them to understand that in this case, the evaluator plays both a program development and an assessment role. In many cases, we find that practitioners are surprised that those who are typically viewed as third-party evaluators can play an important role in providing ongoing feedback.

(3) What are the methodological issues one needs to consider when using case study methodology to examine community-based initiatives in multiple sites?

The important aspect of these evaluations is the role of the rival hypotheses. If you don't think about the alternative hypotheses that might explain what you are seeing, it won't work. The articulation of rival hypotheses, as discussed earlier, helps to improve the validity of the evaluation.

One also needs multiple evidence. There are many sources of evidence that can be used for evaluation, including surveys, archival data, and observations. One needs to use these in a converging manner and be able to understand and address their various strengths and weaknesses.

In evaluating multiple sites, the issue that frequently comes up is whether one or several case studies need to be conducted. I believe that one can test theories with a single case. One well-known use of a single case to test three theories is Graham Allison's analysis of the Cuban Missile crisis (*Essence of decision*).

Multiple cases strengthen single-case results. One has to understand that in case study design we are talking about small numbers; two cases rather than one strengthen the results greatly, while six cases rather than two strengthen the results manifold. One way to use multiple case design is to find sites that operate under different hypotheses in reaching the same goal. For example, if there are three theories – A,B,C – about different interventions to reduce violence in the community, we might choose Site 1 because it is addressing the goal primarily using Theory A; we might choose Site 2 because it is primarily using an approach based on Theory B, etc. By collecting data on all three interventions at all three sites, we should begin to understand the contributions of the different interventions. Such a design, while difficult to implement, does help us to begin to get at the challenge of causality. ◆

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Building the Capacity to Build Capacity

The role of the evaluator is once again expanding. It is expanding beyond a recent focus on increasing participation and collaboration during the evaluation process, to helping programs develop the capacity to evaluate and improve themselves – that is, to become *learning organizations*.

The concepts of developing learning organizations and building organizational capacity originated in the fields of private sector business and management. They define a learning organization as one that assumes that learning is an ongoing and creative process and one that continuously develops in response to the needs of its customers and employees. It is an organization that institutionalizes process and outcome measures, and uses its members to identify plausible avenues for improvement *(see text box)*.

Evaluators are well-equipped to facilitate the development of learning organizations. A sizable knowledge gap exists among evaluators, however, in understanding how a learning organization works, identifying ways to build capacity, and defining the role of the evaluator in facilitating this process. This gap is widened by the fact that much of what is known about learning organizations comes from private sector examples, rather than public sector or non-profit organizations and programs. Thus, while it is easy to see how creating a program that embraces evaluation and uses evaluation results for programmatic decision making is conceptually in line with the evaluation discipline, the pathway to achieving this goal is less discernible.

Evaluators are well-equipped to facilitate the development of learning organizations.

This is the first in a series of *Evaluation Exchange* articles designed to build an ongoing dialogue among evaluators about their role in developing learning organizations. The initial step in this process is to define the concept further by identifying common qualities among learning organizations. In addition, this step examines these qualities in a context familiar to evaluators – service programs – and then articulates the need for their development. Future articles will identify specific methods that programs can use to become learning organizations, and the part that evaluators can play in this process.

A Learning Organization

- Increases its capacity to produce desired and continuous results
- Assumes learning and evaluation are ongoing and creative processes
- Develops, adapts, and transforms in response to changing needs and conditions
- Practices generative learning (which includes expanding capabilities) in addition to adaptive learning (reactive)
- Recognizes the need for all members and stakeholders to participate in the learning process
- Employs a motivated workforce

Learning Organizations Emphasize the Link Between Process Quality and Outcomes.

It is no mystery that the process used to manufacture a product has much to do with the quality of that product. Similarly, the way in which a program delivers services has much to with the strength of its outcomes. Learning organizations emphasize the link between process and outcome, and therefore incorporate mechanisms for constantly improving process quality in their efforts to secure better outcomes. These organizations are able to anticipate, implement, and institutionalize process change.

Service programs traditionally have not placed the same emphasis on constantly exploring the link between process and outcomes. For many years, programs emphasized outcomes and put most of their resources into measuring results. More recently, programs have begun to emphasize process and to measure various facets of service delivery. Less emphasis, however, has been placed on examining the cause and effect relationship between the *way* services are delivered and the eventual outcomes achieved.

Learning Organizations Recognize the Importance of the Individual.

Learning organizations recognize that employees are ultimately responsible for the organization's success, and therefore find ways to inspire and reward good performance. Their human resource management systems use practices such as performance-based accountability, feedback, incentives, and rewards to achieve high productivity. The idea is that employees are responsible for their own performance and for producing results. Part of this responsibility includes identifying ways to measure, evaluate, and improve performance. Organizational rewards are then directly linked to employees' ability to demonstrate positive results.

While service programs recognize the importance of staff in delivering services, they typically do not hold individuals directly accountable for achieving program outcomes. The current national trend toward results-based accountability (see *Evaluation Exchange* Volume II, Numbers 1 and 3) demonstrates a movement toward holding agencies and programs accountable for results, but does not demonstrate the same movement for individuals within those agencies. While arguably, it does not make sense to hold individuals responsible for broad program outcomes, it does make sense to hold them accountable for playing a part in achieving such outcomes. Individuals can define goals and objectives for themselves that are directly in line with the broader program vision, and measure

their progress in meeting these objectives. In this way, individuals become accountable for furthering the progress toward broader program goals.

Like profit-seeking organizations, service programs must constantly accommodate change to maintain "profitability." Successful organizations possess the ability constantly to think, analyze, evaluate, and adapt to changing conditions. Currently, however, few programs possess the qualities common to learning organizations. Many are familiar with the idea of evaluation, but few are familiar with self-evaluation. As a result, few possess the capacity to implement learning activities such as process quality measures and performance-based feedback or incentives.

Evaluators, who are familiar with the concepts that form the core principles of learning organizations – measuring performance and outcomes, collecting data, analyzing findings, interpreting results, and developing recommendations for change – can facilitate the development of this capacity. Thus, in addition to their roles as researchers, instructors, observers, interpreters, advisors, facilitators, conveners, analysts, theorists, and even sometimes therapists, evaluators can look forward to facing the further challenge of becoming capacity-builders. ◆

Julia Coffman
Research Specialist, HFRP

Further Reading:

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Canadian Social Services Senior Managers Forum

How does a nation design a framework for developing human service goals, measuring progress, and holding citizens and public programs accountable for achieving progress? How can a nation accommodate federal and regional perspectives in such a framework? How can a human services framework address employment, training, child care, and disability issues alike? The Social Services Senior Managers Forum in Alberta Canada, November 24-27, 1996, addressed these important issues.

The attendees of the management training – whose roles are comparable to those of federal and state deputy secretaries in the United States – listened to international and national speakers, held round table discussions, and broke into small groups to develop an accountability framework that could be used for all of Canada as well as for individual provinces. In Canada, the federal Department of Human Resource Development and each provincial department of social services have begun the development of individual frameworks. The November meeting determined the common elements among these plans and developed a comprehensive framework.

Attendees and presenters at the training left with an understanding of the current strengths and limitations of results-based accountability frameworks. They began the development of a framework that will be used throughout Canada. Following are highlights of the information presented and discussed:

- The governments of Canada, the United States, Great Britain, and Australia are increasingly focusing on the results of publicly funded programs. This changing context creates new pressures for managers of public programs. Many believe that demonstrating to the public the results of programs paid for by their tax dollars will create a climate of civic engagement. This civic engagement is an important benefit of a results-based accountability effort.
- Developing a results-based accountability framework involves political as well as technical and resource challenges. It is important to engage politicians, program managers, and citizens in the process of developing a successful and adoptable framework. By engaging individuals who represent different perspectives, the process of developing a results-based accountability framework can build champions who will help sustain the effort.
- Although process and context measures have inherent weaknesses, they are important to include in a results-based accountability framework. While it is important to focus on goals and hold programs accountable for results, it is necessary to keep in mind the limits of a public manager's authority. For example, public managers cannot be held accountable for changing economic contexts, and doing so will only garner ill will on the part of citizens and those working in government. It is therefore important to consider significant context variables, such as changing economic conditions, when developing a human services results-based accountability framework.
- Developing a system that generates information that is of use to program managers is an essential component of a results-based accountability effort if it is to reach its potential of creating an environment of learning. Merely reporting indicator data will not necessarily lead to program improvements. Evaluation data should be used to understand why changes occur. It is also important that this information be available to managers so they can make better decisions. ◆

Diane Schilder
Project Manager, HFRP

For further information on this conference, please contact Alice Leung, Alberta Family and Social Services, Centre West, 10035-108 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T5J3E1. (403) 427-3641.

Summer Training:

The Evaluators' Institute

The Evaluators' Institute will be held at the Georgetown University Conference Center in Washington, D.C., from July 14-19. Courses include program evaluation, mixed-method evaluations, controlled field experiments, performance measurement, faculty evaluation, applied sampling, cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analysis, mail and self-administered surveys, coping with difficult measurement problems, optimizing use of research and evaluation in policy-making, and getting the most from small studies. Courses range in price from $350 to $995; group discounts are available. Deadline for course registration and payment is June 16, 1997. Those interested should contact The Evaluators' Institute, 401 E. Jefferson Street, Suite 205, Rockville, MD 20850. (301) 251-7712, e-mail: evalinst@phoenixpp.com ◆

Summer Survey Institute at the University of Michigan

The Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research will offer graduate-level courses in two consecutive four-week sessions, June 2 - June 27 and June 30 - July 25, 1997. Several one-week workshops also will be offered. The Summer Institute is a training program in survey research techniques conducted by the staff of the Survey Research Center and other survey research specialists. Course topics include an introduction to survey research, questionnaire design, cognition and survey measurement, survey data collection methods, sampling methods, analysis of survey data, and analysis of event history data. Course and instructor descriptions are available on the Institute's Web page: http://www.isr.umich.edu/src/si/ To receive a brochure, contact James M. Lepkowski, Director, Summer Institute Survey Research Center, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1248, (313) 764-6595, e-mail: summer@isr.umich.edu ◆

EVALUATIONS TO WATCH

Asian Neighborhood Design: A Practice-Based Anti-Poverty Analysis

People living in poverty are generally thought of as being both economically and socially apart from the mainstream and requiring "special" assistance. The assistance has often taken the form of categorical services addressing the specific needs of targeted neighborhoods or populations, delivered through a variety of public, private, and community programs. While such an approach has led to the development of some excellent programs, their special focus and relatively short duration have often failed to account for the fact that the struggle out of poverty is more of a dynamic process than a static problem.

> The instrument enables the case worker to get to know the participant in much the same way as one might know a relative or close neighbor.

Stable self-sufficiency is another way to view the goal of attacking poverty. Stable self-sufficiency goes beyond the traditional notions of income level that have defined those in and out of poverty: Those who are self-sufficient exhibit a number of qualities, including the ability and resources to make choices based on plans for the future rather than immediate survival. While those struggling to achieve self-sufficiency must have access to service programs, these must be interconnected and combined with a supportive family or community environment. Thus, anti-poverty work cannot be generic or categorical; rather, it is very personal and individualized.

For the past several years, Asian Neighborhood Design (A.N.D.) in San Francisco has developed and implemented an anti-poverty strategy which focuses on individual strengths and weaknesses as a means to address the challenge of self-sufficiency. The foundation of this approach has been an evaluation instrument in which the client and the case worker work together to develop a "self-sufficiency plan" for the client.

The self-sufficiency plan is based on an assessment of seven personal and environmental indicators: income/assets; education/skills; housing/food; safety/environment; human services; relationships; and personal attributes. Underlying this approach is the belief that each person's life is a combination of strengths (assets) and weaknesses (barriers) in these areas and it is the accumulation of a critical mass of strengths which is the distinguishing feature of those who are considered self-sufficient. While those who can be considered self-sufficient may still exhibit a number of weaknesses, the accumulation of strengths is enough to allow these individuals to function independently.

The instrument enables the case worker to get to know the participant in much the same way as one might know a relative or close neighbor. Through a self-assessment and interviews, a profile of the client, including his or her assets and barriers, is developed. The baseline assessment would be charted much as it is for a hypothetical client, Lyn, in Figure 1. The methodology allows the client and the case worker to discuss the various interrelated issues that must be addressed in order for the client to achieve self-sufficiency.

This baseline assessment becomes the starting point for the case worker and the client to develop a personal self-sufficiency plan for the participant. This plan delineates what needs to be done to help the client to reach stable self-sufficiency. This is accomplished primarily through utilization of mainstream support systems or through special assistance based on the client's knowledge or initiative. Progress

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in achieving self-sufficiency is mapped on the chart at regular intervals. Figure 2 shows that after two years, Lyn has turned a number of barriers in her life into strengths.

Important, however, is the understanding that self-sufficiency is not achieved when one criterion is met. Rather, there are transitional phases. In the case of Lyn, although she has found a job and completed training, a number of factors in her life could still destabilize her. The program does not disengage from the individual until stable self-sufficiency is established.

In some cases, a client may take a number of years to develop and stabilize a critical mass of assets that will help him or her manage the risk factors that still affect his or her life. Figure 3 shows Lyn after four years. She has now secured a critical number of assets to help her to deal with the risk factors that continue to affect her life.

Unlike similar analytical instruments, the proposed methodology can be used to track progress of one individual or family over time. The method seeks to capture obvious difference in situations rather than nuances or gray areas. While not intended to be precise, the instrument breaks up overly complex life issues into seven basic elements.

A.N.D.'s work with individuals and families to develop self-sufficiency plans is one aspect of its three-pronged, interactive approach to community building and empowerment. Another aim is to develop or enhance communities of people to support one another by establishing a tradition of peer assistance and responsibility and a sense of shared success. The program encourages the establishment of "career clubs" and a credit system as well as natural cultural or religious affiliations. At the same time, the program is working with policymakers, service providers, and funders by providing recommendations to make the "system" more compatible and responsive to the needs of the clients and their self-sufficiency plans. ◆

Maurice Lim Miller
Executive Director, A.N.D.

For further information on this evaluation approach, please contact: Asian Neighborhood Design, 461 Bush Street, Suite 400, San Francisco, CA 94108, (415) 982-2959.

Self-Sufficiency Assessment

Figure 1 **Baseline Assessment – Lyn**

Healthy Community Elements	Income/ Assets 1	Education/ Skills 2	Housing/ Food 3	Safety/ Environ 4	Human Services 5	Relationships 6	Personal Attributes 7
Major Life Issues	AFDC income inadequate; no savings	High School dropout; no skills	Substandard housing; inadequate food	Apt. burglarized, family threatened	MediCal, but no childcare	Abusive partner, little other support	Motivated and realistic about barriers faced
strong stable asset +2			ASSETS				
+1							◆
-1	◆		◆		◆		
-2 high risk/crisis		◆		◆		◆	
			BARRIERS				

Figure 2 **Two Years Later – Lyn**

Healthy Community Elements	Income/ Assets 1	Education/ Skills 2	Housing/ Food 3	Safety/ Environ 4	Human Services 5	Relationships 6	Personal Attributes 7
Major Life Issues	Union job, beginning to save	Has G.E.D. and completed training	Little change	Little change	Private child and healthcare	Little change	Growing confidence
strong stable asset +2			ASSETS				
+1	◆	◆			◆		◆
-1	◆		◆		◆		
-2 high risk/crisis		◆		◆		◆	
			BARRIERS				

Figure 3 **Four Years Later – Lyn (Essentially Self-Sufficient)**

Healthy Community Elements	Income/ Assets 1	Education/ Skills 2	Housing/ Food 3	Safety/ Environ 4	Human Services 5	Relationships 6	Personal Attributes 7
Major Life Issues	Still working	Taking classes	New safe apartment	Neighborhood still dangerous	Stable benefits	New supportive relationships	Confident and independent
strong stable asset +2			ASSETS			◆	◆
+1	◆	◆	◆		◆		
-1				◆			
-2 high risk/crisis			BARRIERS				

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Making the Transition to Automation: Observations from Six Community-Based Agencies

It took months for the case manager responsible for helping Head Start parents with employment to produce a draft of her first Management Information System (MIS) report. She knew that once the MIS was functional, she would have information that would help her in her work. But the report raised as many questions as it answered: Did a caseload of 36 represent all parents she had counseled or only those currently active? What was meant by "active?" Should parents be considered part of the caseload if interaction with her was brief and informal? When was a parent's success in finding a job an outcome that would have happened anyway and when was it counted as a credit to the project?

The challenges of developing a new MIS are examined in an upcoming report by the Foundation for Child Development (FCD) on six "two-generation" service projects operated by community-based agencies. The report grows out of an FCD grantmaking initiative that provided modest support to the agencies to help families gain access to two complementary sets of services: employment and training help for parents, and developmental services like high quality child care for children. During the grant period, each agency was undergoing a transition to automated record keeping. Following are three conclusions from the FCD report:

Management information systems can provide important benefits to community-based multi-service projects. The Head Start case manager eventually reached resolution on questions raised by her draft report. The exercise of clarifying definitions and identifying specific questions – routine for researchers but unfamiliar to many grassroots agencies – was a first step in helping the project gather information on family characteristics, staff-family contacts, number of job and child care placements, etc. An added benefit was that the exercise revealed key underlying questions for the project: What do our "services to families" consist of? What is a meaningful level of participation? What is "success"? Paper recording might have suggested such questions as well, but technology brought them into sharp focus.

The gains of implementing an MIS are often hard won. At the outset of their grant periods, sites expressed a willingness to set up monitoring systems to help them and the Foundation learn about project operations and whether and under what circumstances their services benefited families. Yet the first wave of sites to receive funding began by making only fitful progress, as other management tasks took priority. While FCD's budget did not permit full-scale technical assistance to the sites, FCD did engage the services of an evaluation-information system consulting firm which provided approximately five days of assistance to each site each year, although actual time spent at some sights was much greater.

Under the technical assistance arrangement, progress varied from site to site. The two sites with the quickest progress took approximately six months to have the system installed, to become somewhat accustomed to it, and to produce the first rudimentary report. After two years, another site was using the MIS to produce reports but only with some difficulty, and the MIS was not yet being used regularly as a management tool.

Planners should take into account the many factors that can affect MIS progress at community-based agencies. At the agencies examined in this report, physical conditions such as old wiring and inconvenient locations for scarce PC's obstructed progress. Learning and using the MIS was time consuming. For example, at the Head Start site, early logs showed the case manager was spending about 30 percent of her week on MIS-related tasks. The lack of continuous on-site technical assistance also delayed progress. The fact that, at the outset, consulting help was not available to the first wave of sites seemed to make a difference; the two sites where technical assistance coincided with start-up proceeded more smoothly.

Installing a system that not only produces monitoring data but also helps with routine tasks like generating mailing labels provides an incentive to make the transition to automation. This, however, is probably less important to success than the more intangible quality of commitment. To overcome the very real obstacles that undermine staff enthusiasm for MIS work – competing demands on time, discomfort with technology, density and obscurity of early MIS reports – managers had to sustain belief in the power of automated tracking to help them understand their interventions. At the Head Start site, this belief was instrumental in getting the project to a point where it could generate reports that let the site director speak with considerable confidence about parents' progress and the role of the case manager in this process. For family programs that provide the difficult-to-quantify services associated with case management and that must stretch resources to make room for MIS work, the level of effort required to achieve this kind of clarity is formidable. But, in a political climate marked by skepticism about the value of such services, the need to invest in this work can only grow. ◆

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The complete report on which this article is based, Theory meets practice: A report on six small-scale two-generation service projects, *will be available from FCD later this year. For information, please contact: Foundation for Child Development, 345 East 46th Street, New York, NY 10017, (212) 697-3150.*

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We regret that we cannot provide copies of the materials listed below. If you are interested in obtaining any of these resources, please contact the publisher or authoring organization directly.

Bartunek, Jean M. & Louis, Meryl R. (1996). *Insider/outsider team research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
In their consideration of insider/outsider research, the authors explore the relationships that external researchers develop with people who work within the setting that is the focus of study. After describing how to conduct such research, the authors map the process of insider/outsider collaboration through a comprehensive case example. They then examine the practical and ethical challenges which may arise when conducting insider/outsider team research and conclude by contemplating implications for the quality of knowledge gained from such research.

Chelimsky, Eleanor & Shadish, William R. (Eds.). (1997). *Evaluation for the 21st century: A resource book*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
Evaluators from around the world explore the evolution and future of evaluation. Sections include a recent history of evaluation; auditing and evaluation; performance measurement and evaluation; international evaluation; new topics for evaluation; current methodologies; and the purpose of evaluation.

Denzin, Norman K. (1996). *Interpretive ethnography: Ethnographic practices for the 21st century*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
The author examines ethnography in a postmodern and multinational age. He argues that postmodern ethnography is the moral discourse of the contemporary world and that ethnographers can and should explore new sorts of experiential texts — such as performance-based text, literary journalism, and narratives of the self — to form a new ethics of inquiry.

Heron, John. (1996). *Cooperative inquiry: Research into the human condition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
This guidebook offers strategies for implementing inquiry groups and presents three key methods for approaching group development. It introduces different forms of cooperative inquiry, principal kinds of inquiry development, phases of the inquiry cycle, as well as topics related to its use. The guide also provides an exhaustive, theoretical background on cooperative inquiry.

International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). *Participatory learning and action*.
This series is designed to enable practitioners of participatory methodologies to share their field experiences, conceptual reflections, and methodological innovations. (This informal series is published three times a year; subscription $25 /year. 3 Endsleigh Street, London. e-mail: iiedagri@gn.apc.org).

Narayan, Deepa. (1996). *Toward participatory research*. (World Bank Technical Paper No. 307). Washington, DC: The World Bank.
This practical guide discusses the principles underlying participatory techniques, insights gained from the use of such techniques in the field, best practices for designing and implementing these methods, and actual participatory activities and checklists. While the findings draw primarily from the water and sanitation sector, they are proving applicable in other sectors and settings as well.

Narayan, Deepa & Srinivasan, Lyra. (1994). *Participatory development tool kit: Materials to facilitate community empowerment*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
Based on training experience in 20 developing countries, this tool kit has been developed to assist trainers, practitioners, and others to incorporate participatory processes and methods into their programs. The tool kit includes visual materials, activity envelopes for participants, and a guidebook which assist in the generation of locally-based program information.

Stringer, Ernest T. (1996). *Action research: A handbook for practitioners*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
After explaining community-based action research in terms of qualitative methodology, the author presents clear, comprehensive strategies for conducting action research. Advancing a concise, three-tier approach, Stringer recommends that practitioners simply look, think, and act in order to resolve issues and problems within their communities. In addition, the author discusses the legitimacy of action research as well as its function in the future.

Trochim, William M.K. & Campbell, Donald T. (In press). *The regression point displacement design for evaluating community-based pilot programs and demonstration projects*.
The Regression Point Displacement Design is a pre-test/post-test quasi-experimental design that usually involves a single treated group and multiple control groups. This design appears to have potential, especially for assessing the impact of pilot programs and demonstration projects. The validity issues and statistical analysis for this design are described. Several real and hypothetical examples are presented. [Note: The draft of the paper can be accessed on the Internet at http://trochim.human.cornell.edu/research/rpd/rpd.htm]

◆

Caroline Schaefer
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Corrections

In our last issue (Vol. II, Number 4) we incorrectly identified the funder of the John Heinz Neighborhood Development Program (NDP) Grantees' Technical Assistance as the Heinz Endowments (page 10). The funder is not the Heinz Endowments but the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. We also incorrectly identified the telephone number for the Harvard Project on Schooling & Children (page 16). The correct number is (617) 495-3266. We regret the errors.

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Achieving and Measuring Results: Lessons from HFRP's Parenting Study

In this era of increased accountability, family support and parenting programs are under pressure to demonstrate their results. Programs must look to and build on the lessons from the past three decades of research and evaluation in order to increase their chances of success and survival. Their results will determine their future.

In a forthcoming sourcebook on family support programs which focus on improving parenting, the Harvard Family Research Project reflects on what is known about family support and parenting programs from the field's history of research and evaluation. We lay out what can be done to meet demands for accountability in terms of program and evaluation practice.

Based on in-depth analysis of 30 programs profiled in the study, we make twelve recommendations about program and evaluation elements. These recommendations can be used for future decisions about programs that aim to improve parenting or support good parenting practices.

• **Develop services that focus on and seek to modify parent-child interactions.** An emphasis on parent-child interactions is called for since good parent-child interactions lead to better developmental outcomes for children.

• **Tailor services to meet the needs of unique regional, cultural, and ethnic groups.** Our nation is composed of diverse communities with equally diverse values and needs. Programs should match their designs to these needs without sacrificing important core attributes of interventions.

• **Start interventions early and acknowledge the potential need for a continuity of services.** It is easier to prevent the negative effects of poor parenting than it is to reverse them, so early intervention is recommended. The availability of supports and services in the later years is also important.

• **Have reasonable expectations about the time commitment required of families and providers.** Time expectations for program participation must fit with other demands on families and providers. Alternate service arrangements may be necessary.

• **Recognize that factors in parents' social and cultural context have an impact on parenting.** Programs must think about ways to address variables outside of their purview that can have a negative impact on families.

• **Work with other providers to form a system of efficient and comprehensive services.** Families need access to a variety of services to sustain their ability to be good parents. Family support and parenting programs alone cannot provide all of these services; they must work with other providers to develop systems of services for families.

• **Use evaluation strategies that reflect and support the field's move toward more comprehensive initiatives.** Traditional evaluation methods are not sufficient to assess complex and comprehensive initiatives.

• **Examine child and parent outcomes and needs longitudinally.** It is important that program results be examined over time to demonstrate long-term program success and to assess periodically the needs of parents and children.

• **Choose measures that reflect intended program outcomes.** As the pressure to prove results increases, programs must be confident that their measures are a good reflection of their progress and are applicable to the populations they serve.

• **Examine the relation between parent and child outcomes.** Programs that are interested in changing parenting to affect child development should examine the relationship between changes in parent outcomes and changes in child outcomes to demonstrate that they have achieved their goal.

• **Establish mutually beneficial relationships between evaluators, providers, and child development researchers.** Collaborative relationships are necessary to ensure that evaluation results are useful and used.

• **Consider using cost-effectiveness analyses as a method for measuring and reporting program results.** These analyses determine the effectiveness of a program in terms of program costs. They provide valuable decision-making criteria for policymakers and providers.

The recommendations and detailed program profiles will be included in the forthcoming sourcebook. ◆

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Research Coordinator, HFRP

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Immediate Job Opening

Project Manager, Building Capacity for Family/School Partnerships (Three-Year Project)

Harvard Family Research Project is seeking a talented senior professional with strong organizational and managerial skills to manage the new Building Capacity for Family/School Partnerships project. The Project Manager will supervise a 5-7 member team which is responsible for providing technical assistance to national organizations to support their efforts to build capacity for replicable and sustainable family/school partnerships. The Manager will be responsible for conceptualizing, organizing, and facilitating annual meetings/workshops with organizations; helping to build an organizational learning network; conducting documentation site visits/needs assessments; disseminating new knowledge; related duties. Some travel is required.

Experience/Skills: M.A. in educational administration/policy required, with a minimum of 5-7 years related experience. Strong technical assistance and management skills, workshop facilitation experience, familiarity with qualitative/applied research, and superior interpersonal, organizational, and writing skills required. Knowledge of organizational development/leadership in the non-profit sector is required. Experience with schools/ school administration and culturally diverse populations is helpful.

Salary/Benefits: This full-time position is grant funded through 12/31/97 with strong possibility of continuation through 12/31/99. Minimum hiring salary is $42,700.

To Apply: Send resume/cover letter immediately to Susan G. Riegler, Human Resources, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 118 Longfellow Hall, Appian Way, Cambridge, MA, 02138. In your cover letter, please note that the job requisition number is 74771. No phone calls, faxes, or Internet replies please.

Consider joining one of the following LISTSERVs, or electronic discussion groups, as a way to contribute to the dialogue surrounding your research and evaluation interests.

EVALTALK: An American Evaluation Association (AEA) Listserv
EVALTALK is a medium for open discussions about evaluation issues. Subscribers include a diverse and renowned range of evaluation professionals. Although sponsored by the AEA, the list is open to anyone. To subscribe, send an e-mail to LISTSERV@UA1VM.UA.EDU with the message SUBSCRIBE EVALTALK YourFirstName YourLastName.

AERA, ERL-L, etc.: American Educational Research Association (AERA) Listservs
The AERA offers several listservs, including two general lists (AERA and ERL-L), twelve division lists, one graduate student list, and several Special Interest Group lists. To choose one that interests you, see the AERA Web site at http://www.ed.asu.edu/aera. To subscribe, send an e-mail to LISTSERV@ASU.EDU with the message SUBSCRIBE LISTSERV NAME YourFirstName YourLastName.

APPSOC: A Society for Applied Sociology Listserv
The Society for Applied Sociology is an international organization of professionals that apply sociological knowledge in a wide variety of settings. To subscribe, send an e-mail to MAJORDOMO @INDIANA.EDU with the message SUBSCRIBE APPSOC YourFirstName YourLastName.

EMPOWERMENT-EVALUATION: A Collaborative, Participative, and Empowerment Evaluation Listserv
This listserv grew out of the American Evaluation Association's Collaborative, Participatory, and Empowerment Evaluation (CPEE) Topical Interest Group (TIG). It is an excellent opportunity to share experiences in this new evaluation domain. To subscribe, send an e-mail to MAJORDOMO@LISTS.STANFORD.EDU with the message SUBSCRIBE EMPOWERMENT-EVALUATION @lists.stanford.edu

GOVTEVAL: A Public Sector Evaluation Listserv
This list is for evaluators of government programs, as well as others interested in public sector evaluation. It is based at the National Institute of Public Administration, Malaysia, on a joint basis and in close cooperation with the Program for Public Sector Evaluation, Royal Melbourne Institute of Public Administration, Australia. To subscribe, send an e-mail to LISTSERV@JARING.MY with the message SUBSCRIBE GOVTEVAL YourFirstName YourLastName. ◆

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HARVARD FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT

THE EVALUATION EXCHANGE:

Emerging Strategies in Evaluating Child and Family Services

Volume III, Number 2 1997 — Free Quarterly Newsletter

From The Director's Desk

Heather B. Weiss
Director, HFRP

In this issue, we return to a topic that was featured in one of our earliest issues of the *Evaluation Exchange* – the evaluation of school-linked services. School-linked services are emerging as a promising approach to address the increasingly complex problems facing children and families. Situated in a natural community locus, the school, these programs share a holistic, ecological view of the child and attempt to operationalize this philosophy by linking a wide array of preventive services for children and their families.

We know, however, that our understanding of these programs is far from complete. We do not yet understand which school-linked service interventions work and which do not. We know that these programs must be accountable, but defining to whom and for what they are to be accountable is difficult. We know that these programs have substantial governance implications but are unsure as to whether new collaborative arrangements can work. Finally, we seek to expand these interventions if they prove successful but are unsure about the conditions necessary to ensure long-term viability.

As practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and evaluators of school-linked services, we have our work cut out for us. In this issue, we carry on the dialogue about school-linked services and offer a variety of perspectives. In our lead article, we discuss some of the considerations and best practices related to evaluating school-linked services, based on the insights of nine evaluators of school-linked services programs. Our two "Promising Practices" articles move us from the practice of evaluation to the practicality of evaluation. Mary Wagner and Shari Golan, evaluators of the California Healthy Start Initiative, write about their efforts to increase the use of evaluative information at local sites. Alfredo Tijerina, a Project Coordinator for the Houston-based School of the Future, discusses how he has found evaluative information useful in his work. In our "Questions and Answers" section, we speak with Cheryl Mitchell about Vermont's efforts to integrate educational and social services at the state and local levels. Two evaluations are featured in our "Evaluations to Watch" section. The first is the evaluation of the multi-site New Jersey

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School-Based Youth Services Program being conducted by the Academy for Educational Development. The second is an evaluation of the Gardner Extended Services School in Boston that will be conducted by evaluators at Boston College. The "Beyond Basic Training" section highlights two forthcoming training programs. Our "New and Noteworthy" and "Electronic Mailbox" sections provide current information on publications and Internet sites that can help inform our practice. Finally, in our "Spotlight" section Richard Brandon and Andrew Gordon describe how they are evaluating the effectiveness of communications strategies aimed at strengthening the linkage between public opinion and public policy. HFRP researcher Diane Schilder discusses HFRP's research on results-based accountability efforts and Karen Horsch examines research results in preparing teachers in family involvement.

In closing, we would like to thank the many people who contributed to this issue. Their insights and experiences have increased our understanding of the range and complexity of issues facing evaluators today, and we hope that our readers will find the same. ◆

HARVARD FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT PUBLICATION

HFRP announces the publication of its new *Resource Guide for Family-Centered Child Care.* This volume offers ideas and resources for implementing family support principles in child care, and provides practitioners with ideas and practical activities. It also features an annotated bibliography of current publications and training materials that child care providers can use to improve their efforts to support families. The Resource Guide is divided into five sections: (1) implementing family support principles and child care, (2) training programs and materials, (3) parenting materials, (4) self-assessment tools, and (5) resources for further exploration. You may request copies by contacting the HFRP publications department at 38 Concord Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138, Tel: (617) 496-4304, Fax: (617) 495-8594, e-mail: hfrp@hugse1.harvard.edu $4.50 per copy, plus $2.45 for shipping and handling.

Evaluating School-Linked Services: Considerations and Best Practices

Increasingly, the traditional organizational and political boundaries between education and social services are giving way to more integrated approaches that help children and their families. School-linked services are one program approach that seeks to address concerns about fragmented and duplicative services by offering a single point of entry – the school site. These efforts take many forms, and the goals of such programs are numerous. Most display a holistic approach to children; joint planning; shared service delivery; and collaboration and/or coordination.

Determining how school-linked services programs work, what their impact is, and whether they should be expanded, however, is difficult. We asked nine evaluators of a variety of school-linked services programs to identify some considerations and best practices related to evaluating outcomes, sustainability, and collaboration. We also asked them to provide some insights into evaluation design and data collection methods. Following is a summary of their responses:

Evaluating Outcomes

In this era of increased scrutiny of and calls for accountability in public programs, demonstrating the outcomes of school-linked services initiatives is vital.

Help to elucidate complex relationships and processes by using a theory of change approach.

A theory of change approach requires programs to specify clearly their intended activities and the expected short- and longer-term outcomes of these activities. This approach is one way of beginning to clarify the "black box" of integrated social interventions. It enables evaluators and stakeholders to relate long-, intermediate-, and short-term goals with activities and processes and helps to clarify the linkages among them. A theory of change approach is best employed early in the process – ideally in the planning stage of the intervention. Evaluators employing such an approach must be willing to play the role of facilitator to articulate the program's theory of change.

Examine a variety of long-term outcomes.

Evaluators of school-linked services programs must study a range of long-term outcomes to obtain a true picture of the impact of programs. Decisions about which outcomes to examine must be informed by the services and activities that programs actually provide as well as by consideration of the outcomes that stakeholders view as credible. In most cases, these include educational as well as social service results. Educational outcomes are critical to policymakers, school leaders, and parents but are often difficult to change. Consequently, evaluators are examining test scores, drop-out rates, student behavior, and attendance and completion rates. They are also assessing important social service outcomes such as substance abuse, violence and sexual behavior, health status, and social skills.

Include credible intermediate outcomes and process measures.

Most desired changes in social and educational well-being will take many years to achieve. Thus, evaluators point out the importance of identifying and measuring important shorter-term outcomes and processes. Evaluators of the Gardner Extended Services School (Boston, MA) note that other indicators which are or could be related to school success should also be used when examining education outcomes. These might include children's beliefs about the relationship of education to jobs, and school-related attitudes of parents, teachers, and community agency personnel. Evaluators of the Kentucky Family Resource and Youth Services Center Program have found that by moving from long-term social indicators to more

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proximal classroom indicators, they were able to relieve some of the demands on the program to demonstrate quickly reduction in drop-out and substance abuse rates and enhanced school attendance and achievement.

Identify and understand the context for outcomes.

Given the newness of multi-service initiatives such as those linked with schools, it is important that evaluators provide information that helps stakeholders understand the context for outcomes. Findings on outcomes should be carefully framed within a description of the program's actual operating context (including fiscal and philosophical support) and should take into account some measure of the actual level of services each participant received. Evaluators of the School of the Future (Texas) point out that, in some cases, indicators may get worse before they get better. For example, a successful program which retains students with the lowest academic standing in school may result in lower test scores school-wide, at least in the short term.

Evaluating Collaboration

By their nature, school-linked services require collaboration among the different entities providing services and between these entities and the school. While collaboration among different entities serving children and families is one of the most important factors in the success of integrating social and educational services (and is often a goal of these programs), it is also one of the most difficult to evaluate.

Examine the structure, nature, and image of collaboration.

The structure of collaboration has to do with contractual arrangements and financing of service provision. The evaluators are examining the following: what services are provided, by whom, and when; the extent to which program staff and services are housed in school facilities; the availability of other school resources (personnel, expertise, in-kind support) for programs; the level of integration of school and program budgets; and the extent to which program and school staff members engage in collaborative strategic planning.

An assessment of the nature of collaboration entails an examination of how smoothly the different entities work together and to what extent cultures, goals, and interests are congruent. To assess this, some evaluators are examining the extent to which program staff participate in school-related committees, activities, and functions; school staff participate in program committees, activities, and functions; and program services are incorporated into the school's planned response to particular school problems. Through surveys and interviews, evaluators can also learn about how far school personnel are knowledgeable about and supportive of the school-linked programs.

Finally, surveys of program beneficiaries (students and parents) as well as other important stakeholders can help evaluators glean information about whether the program and its operation are viewed positively or negatively. Such information can also help evaluators to determine the extent to which school-linked services might be sustainable.

Investigate parent and family involvement as an additional aspect of collaboration.

While collaboration is traditionally conceived as the relationship among formal agencies, parent and family involvement in the school-linked services effort is also an important component of collaboration. Evaluators of the Iowa School-Based Youth Services Program are evaluating family and parent collaboration via staff assessments which consider communication systems and opportunities for families to be involved in the programs offered. Communication systems include, among other things, letters, phone contacts, home visits, newsletters, and in-school conferences. Opportunities for family involvement include individual program planning, parent/family counseling, decision-making committee participation, and classes for parents.

Use evaluation of collaboration for self-assessment and improvement.

The process of assessing the health of a collaboration can itself be useful to sites. As the evaluators of Missouri Caring Communities Initiative have found, if all partners to a collaboration are invited to complete an assessment instrument, points of agreement and disagreement can be fed back to the site, and important issues can be determined. When gathered across sites, such data can be used to compare collaborative characteristics with outcomes. At a given site, members of the collaborative can see, for example, to what extent they agree on their biggest barriers and their greatest strengths.

Evaluating Sustainability

School-linked services often begin as experimental programs, so their duration beyond initial funding and their possible replication and scale-up are important evaluation considerations.

Examine the institutional and individual relationships.

The evaluators note that an examination of the multiple and reciprocal relationships at a number of different levels is an important aspect of evaluating the sustainability of these programs. This includes the extent and degree of engagement by parents, community agencies, organizations, churches, and other entities as well as the extent and kinds of formal support offered by local educational leaders. The evaluator of the Delaware Academy Student Health Program (New York) notes that ongoing support of constituencies is likely to depend on at least four factors: the satisfaction of beneficiaries that their own needs are being met; the belief of beneficiaries that the program is "making a difference"; the degree of controversy related to the program; and the confidence of stakeholders that the use of scarce resources for this purpose is justified relative to other potential uses. These factors can be evaluated through interview and survey data and by analysis of utilization data.

Consider the stability and adequacy of funding sources.

Evaluation of financial sustainability requires the identification of all funding sources and their relative importance and an assessment of long-term potential. It is also important to examine how programs have applied or acted on their knowledge about potential funding sources.

Examine the sustainability of outcomes as well.

While program durability is an important aspect for evaluation, evaluators also

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suggest that evaluation examine the sustainability of the outcomes achieved. The evaluators of the New Jersey School-Based Youth Services Program recommend that the durability of outcomes be examined at two levels. To evaluate the sustainability of student outcomes, evaluators should look at the persistence of positive outcomes or reduction of negative outcomes over time, ideally following students through adolescence. They should also examine evidence of developmental outcomes, identifying strengths and assets that the student can both apply broadly and use to address other issues in his or her life. At the school and community level, evaluators should look at the establishment and maintenance of a stable infrastructure of peer and adult support for positive youth development and the institutionalization of a coherent and well-integrated system of linked services to address a range of youth needs.

Consider the extent to which institutions become effective "learning organizations."

Evaluators of the Chicago Full Service Schools Initiative have found that the extent to which the program is becoming an effective "learning organization" is also an important facet of sustainability. The evaluators have begun to track the three sites included in the evaluation to assess how effectively the three planning groups "learn to learn," that is, learn to conserve, analyze, and disseminate information. This involves striking a balance among planners between conceptual conversation and action-oriented discussion.

Evaluation Design

The nine evaluators provided a variety of insights on evaluation design:

Use a Participatory Approach.

Evaluators of school-linked services programs note that a participatory approach to the evaluation of these programs is important. The incorporation of multiple perspectives ensures the development of instruments and strategies sensitive to and reflective of stakeholder understandings of the programs and brings their perspectives to understanding and using the data collected.

Begin early.

Evaluators suggest that the evaluative endeavor should begin as early as possible. This allows time to build trust, understanding, and buy-in among participants as well as to understand basic parameters for on-site research (including potential constraints on data collection methods).

Incorporate multiple methods.

Evaluators note that the evaluation design for school-linked services programs should employ both quantitative and qualitative methods. These methods can reinforce and inform one another. For example, intensive interviews, focus groups, and observations can be used to develop questions for survey instruments. Findings from surveys and reviews of program data can be illuminated through individual interview and case study data. Information from multiple methods additionally helps evaluators to communicate findings to a wide variety of audiences.

Maintain an ongoing information exchange.

Evaluation should be seen as part of organizational learning – as integral to program design, implementation, and success. Therefore, evaluators of school-linked services programs suggest that adequate feedback loops be established to ensure timely reporting of findings to program staff and other stakeholders. This helps to develop buy-in into the evaluation while at the same time assuring that the evaluators have obtained an accurate picture of reality.

Develop local evaluation capacity.

Evaluators also note that, to the extent possible, evaluators should try to develop the capacity of program staff and others to conduct ongoing evaluative activity. The evaluators of the California Healthy Start School-linked Services Initiative used "evaluation coaches," who were trained in the data needs of the statewide evaluation and were given specific questions to examine at their sites. Coaches, the evaluators found, were key to translating local evaluation reports provided by the statewide evaluator into possible implications for program development. The coaches increased the flexibility and relevance of large statewide evaluation to individual communities and helped communities begin to use systematically-collected information to support their program improvement and sustainability efforts. ◆

Karen Horsch
Research Specialist, HFRP

A longer version of this paper will be available from HFRP in Fall 1997. Please contact HFRP's publications office at (617) 496-4304 for more information.

The Evaluators

Mary Geisz, Cornell University: Evaluated the Delaware Academy Student Health Program.

Robert Illback, R.E.A.C.H.: Evaluated the Kentucky Family Resource and Youth Services Center Program.

Scott Keir, the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health: Evaluated the School of the Future Initiative.

George Madaus and Mary Walsh, Boston College School of Education: Are evaluating the Gardner Extended Services School.

Ray Morley and James Veale, State of Iowa, Department of Education: Are evaluating the Iowa School-Based Youth Services Program.

Susan Philliber, Philliber Research Associates: Is evaluating the Missouri Caring Communities Initiative.

Mary Wagner and Shari Golan, SRI International: Evaluated the California Healthy Start School-Linked Services Initiative.

Constancia Warren and Anita Baker, the Academy for Educational Development: Are evaluating the New Jersey School-Based Youth Services Program.

Sam Whalen, The Center for Talent Development, Northwestern University: Is evaluating the Chicago Full Service Schools Initiative.

The Harvard Family Research Project wishes to thank all who shared their insights with us.

Interview with Cheryl Mitchell

Cheryl Mitchell is Deputy Secretary for Vermont's Agency of Human Services. We asked Ms. Mitchell to describe some of Vermont's efforts to integrate education and social services at the state and local levels, as well as some of the lessons learned from this effort.

(1) Could you please describe Vermont's goals and strategies for integrating education and social services?

Our primary goal is to improve outcomes for children and families in the state of Vermont. We have developed a framework of outcome areas and indicators associated with each. Within this framework, we are trying to foster a "streamlining of the system." In addition, we are promoting the idea that we must focus on children and families in order to improve the community climate for people of all ages in Vermont. We are working toward meeting these goals through four interlocking strategies at the state and local levels.

• *Community service delivery model*

At the local level, we are employing a community service delivery model. Vermont has no county governments; instead, there are 12 service areas as well as 261 school districts and 60 supervisory unions. Each union puts together its own set of services and mechanisms which reach out to children and families. The actual plans of service are developed at the community level. An integral part of this process includes planning groups composed of parents, school personnel, social service workers, and health care providers, all of whom work with a state liaison to put together a plan that goes to the state for approval. The planning groups are responsible for a variety of school-linked services such as parenting classes, drop-in recreational programs, and early literacy programs.

• *Links with the health care community*

Another component of school-linked services is schools' links with the health care community, where physicians and physician's assistants spend time in schools seeing children. This has been particularly helpful in Vermont's rural communities. Additionally, the Department of Health has entered into contracts with supervisory unions and enrolled children in health care coverage. Most of these school-linked programs are using Medicaid connection dollars, and the state has central oversight responsibilities and sets specific standards.

• *Team for children and families*

At the state level, there is a team for children and families, whose members include parents, community representatives, higher education representatives, and program managers from state departments. This team provides advice to programs such as statewide Success By Six, our early childhood initiative. Success By Six outlines a set of outcomes involved in preparing children for school and is supported with state general fund dollars which help communities create comprehensive systems of care.

• *Financing mechanism*

Another statewide program is Success Beyond Six, a financing mechanism which focuses on the needs of children, families, and school teachers, and permits schools to use local tax dollars to meet needs of specific children.

(2) What have you seen as some of the challenges and benefits to integrating education and social services in Vermont?

The issue of boundaries is an ongoing problem. Traditionally, schools have been quite separate from the rest of the world. With so many different local entities, there is often the question of who fits where. Although we still struggle with this issue, we are making progress and moving more towards a child and family-focused service system. The growth of technology has deemphasized boundaries. With this growth has come the ability to process applications instantaneously, to know which services are available, and to schedule joint meetings. Another factor is the amount of time people spend together in the planning groups or on specific projects between schools and human services. As people feel more comfortable with each other and recognize that we are all ultimately trying to do the same thing, the issue of boundaries is downplayed.

As people feel more comfortable with each other and recognize that we are all ultimately trying to do the same thing, the issue of boundaries is downplayed.

The issue of money and legislation continues to be a problem as well. There are still areas of the state where there is a tremendous dearth of resources, and it tends to be those areas that are least aggressive in seeking out additional funding. In terms of legislation, virtually every year new federal legislation and new state legislation target specific problems, and each piece of legislation has a requirement for an advisory committee. So, at the same time that people are trying to consolidate their thinking, there is this legislative pressure to have all these new separate entities.

Our efforts are clearly paying off in terms of what is happening for children and their families. For example, real reductions in child abuse rates, teen pregnancy rates, and overall improvements in the health status of children stand out as clear achievements. We have been able to make limited resources go much further, and that has brought a new sense of pride and commitment in our communities. People are looking out for each other, and really beginning to shoulder and share the sense that we are all jointly responsible for the well-being of children in Vermont.

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(3) How is Vermont evaluating these efforts?

We are using a multi-faceted approach, which includes quantitative, qualitative, and case study methods. The quantitative aspect investigates three outcome areas: demographic, educational, and health care statistics. First, the set of demographic evaluations are called community profiles, in which we are simply tracking outcomes and indicators over time. With these profiles, people are able to observe trends for each supervisory union, each county or district area and the state as a whole. We can also track our work in relation to benchmarks that we have set. In our second focus, we are studying educational outcomes through our examination of school report cards. This process is being done on a school-by-school basis, and enables us to consider standardized test scores as well as school climate issues. A third, similar data tracking process is being implemented to examine health outcomes overall for Vermonters.

The qualitative approach to the evaluation features an ongoing engagement of consumer groups, parent groups, and client groups. We are interested in whether people are satisfied with the services we are offering, whether people feel respected and involved, and whether their needs are being met properly. In addition, this approach works to develop our community groups as learning communities, where evaluators from higher education groups work with community planning groups to identify their needs and mechanisms for communication.

Finally, we have done a number of case studies using the family voices process and studying changes in a community by interviewing its members in an effort to support future program planning.

As technology improves and we are administratively able to link data sets across departments, we will be in a better position to study program impacts as well as isolate the elements that are making a real difference. We also hope to improve communication systems so the continuous feedback loop is much smoother than it is right now. Technological advances such as interactive television will help us to provide timely information to improve decision making. ◆

Caroline Schaefer
Research Assistant, HFRP

PROMISING PRACTICES

Using Evaluation Results: The Program Staff Perspective

Evaluations of school-linked service programs are frequently commissioned by outside agencies, often the very groups which support these programs' survival. While in many cases, the inclusion and cooperation of the program staff are crucial to the evaluation process, the information from the evaluation is not always fed back to these staff to inform program development. While the lessons which funders extract from evaluation data are important, the information provided in the evaluation process can be valuable for program staff as well.

The Houston School of the Future has had such an experience. Houston was one of four Texas sites selected by the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health's School of the Future initiative. Each site was provided a five-year grant (1990-1995) to establish a school-based services program. The grant provided for the services of an on-site project coordinator who was primarily responsible for project administration, service and community outreach, and public relations. The goal of the project was twofold: to enable selected schools to coordinate and implement school-based social and health services on their campuses and to evaluate the effectiveness of this method of service delivery. Today, two years beyond the end of the grant period, the project is continuing at each site.

The evaluation had both a quantitative and a qualitative component. The quantitative evaluation, the purpose of which was to determine the effectiveness and impact of the project on students and their schools, used nationally known instruments to collect student-level information on emotional well-being, self-esteem, and perceptions of school climate. These data were supplemented by school district data on academic achievement. The qualitative component showed the process of project development. Data for this portion was collected through two surveys and interviews and included information on project strengths, weaknesses, and barriers; perceptions of the project and the project coordinators; and opportunities for project continuation and potential incorporation into the educational system.

As Project Coordinator of the Houston School of the Future for more than five years, I have found that well-designed and implemented evaluations can offer information integral to supporting service programs, such as those that the Houston School of the Future provides. During one of the interviews with evaluators conducted early in the grant period, I stated that the schools would not abandon the project after the funding period ended. My prediction proved accurate, and the evaluation and its outcomes have played a part in generating the support necessary for the project's continuation in a number of ways.

• ***Identifying key areas of concern:***

Each School of the Future site conducted a survey in which stakeholders identified key areas of concern. This was invaluable to us. The results of our survey supported our claim regarding the need for health services and led to the establishment of the health clinic, which has become the hallmark of the Houston school. Subsequent data collection efforts also assisted in the development of the project. For example, because a depression scale revealed a need to have a psychologist and a psychiatrist on staff, the health clinic now has these.

• ***Putting proposals together:***

Since the Hogg Foundation grant funded only the coordinators and evaluation, we had to work hard to gain the support of others. The evaluation findings both confirmed what we knew early on and helped us to galvanize the support of others. For example, the evaluation of Compadres, a violence prevention program, helped us with our proposal for Ensueños, a substance-abuse program. We wove the findings into the narrative, which made our proposal stronger and resulted in our getting the grant.

• ***Building partnerships:***

In order to encourage additional support from potential collaborative partners, we give them booklets describing the project and its services, its relationship with the community, and the lessons learned from its experiences. Because of the successes identified early in the project, we have been able to build on the schools' resources and strengths and on partnership strengths. It is important to recognize the resources in the community, not just money. These publications also are used by participants for planning project expansion. Furthermore, these publications have provided us with valuable contacts and media attention, which has led to inquiries and visits. It is important to be able to show that you have done something innovative.

Some aspects of the evaluation were not as useful to us. For example, although the stakeholder survey helped the project to bring in the clinic, as a result of either confusion of records or inconsistency in record keeping, data on outcomes for students who used this service have been only moderately useful. Quantitative findings have been problematic for other reasons as well. So many variables influence outcomes from school-based service programs that it is difficult to determine which interventions led to the outcomes obtained. From the program perspective, this is particularly troublesome. Additionally, the great amount of mobility within the population left us too small a sample to study longer-term program results effectively. It also would have been helpful had project staff members been able to contribute to the evaluation design. As the project brought in services, we could have identified some of the evaluation pieces that concerned us in order to obtain information that would be more useful to us. However, although the quantitative findings were problematic in several ways, they did enable us to demonstrate to stakeholders that there were unmet needs in the community, and this helped us to gain support for the program. ◆

Alfredo Tijerina
Coordinator, School of the Future, Houston

Documents describing the School of the Future initiative can be obtained by contacting the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, The University of Texas, Post Office Box 7998, Austin, TX 78713-7998. Tel: (512) 471-5041.

Bringing it Home: Supporting the Local Use of Data

The statewide evaluation of California's Healthy Start School-linked Services Initiative, funded by a consortium of California-based foundations, has compiled the most comprehensive database available on the processes and outcomes of school-linked services. Evaluators from SRI International drew on that database throughout the evaluation to inform local sites and the Healthy Start state partnership about the implementation of the initiative and the results for children, families, and schools. SRI's experience underscores both the value of sharing evaluation information regularly with programs and the difficulty of doing so in a timely and useful way.

Many sites reported sharing their quarterly reports with their advisory boards to assess their accomplishments.

Through Healthy Start, the California Department of Education (CDE) awards competitive grants of up to $400,000 to local education agencies that work in partnership with other public and private community organizations to develop new or expand existing efforts to provide comprehensive, integrated services linked to schools. The first 65 grantees, funded in 1992 and 1993, were involved in the evaluation, which was completed in 1996. The evaluation:

- described the sponsoring collaboratives and their operations
- collected detailed information on the the services provided to children and their families
- assessed outcomes of participating families in the areas of basic needs, health and health care, mental health, employment and financial independence, education, teen risk behaviors, and legal system involvement
- assessed school-wide impacts regarding student mobility, attendance, school climate, parent involvement, disciplinary actions, and academic performance
- linked characteristics of collaboratives and services to child, family, and school impacts in order to identify factors contributing to greater benefits
- reported on the sustainability of local initiatives after their initial grants were expended and factors that supported sustainability.

During the evaluation, SRI prepared several reports and briefs summarizing the results at the state level. SRI also shared local information and results with each grantee on a regular basis through the following:

• ***Quarterly Reports***

One mechanism for the dissemination of information was a quarterly report of service and client data. SRI developed a single-sheet, two-sided report form that recorded for the quarter and project-to-date the number of clients who had approached the local project for different kinds of services, the number of clients served and the numbers of units of different services that they received, the number of clients on waiting lists for different services, the number of referrals made for outside services, and the results of those referrals. In addition, the form reported the number of children and families served and demographic characteristics of those clients. A report for each local initiative was accompanied by a statewide aggregate compilation for comparison.

Many sites reported sharing their quarterly reports with their advisory boards to assess their accomplishments. These reports suggested program improvements and examined the amount and quality of data being submitted to SRI.

To support sites in their analysis of

quarterly reports, SRI encouraged them to address the following questions: (1) Does your program reach the clients you intend to serve? (2) Do the types and frequencies of services delivered match your program's goals? (3) Is there a need for services that you currently are not able to provide? (4) To what extent are clients being referred outside for services, and to what extent are follow-ups being conducted? and (5) How often do referrals result in actual service delivery?

Even among sites that used the reports, however, data were sometimes perceived as late and not user-friendly. Some sites believed that the three-month lag between the end of a quarter and receipt of a report – required by SRI to process the thousands of individual service records from 65 sites – made information too out-of-date to guide programs in a rapidly changing environment. In addition, the desire to keep the report to one page for easy dissemination to many interested parties created a form which was dense with data. This format was not practical for many people who were not used to relying on so much data.

Improvements could have been made in both timeliness and user-friendliness if the evaluation had included a component for helping sites develop the capacity to compile their own service- and client-related information. Assisting with such capacity-building activities for the 65 sites exceeded the scope of the evaluation tasks, however.

• *Evaluation Coaches*

Use of the quarterly report at the local level was supported by local evaluation "coaches," who helped sites adapt the statewide evaluation activities to local needs. Coaches also helped sites interpret and use the information that SRI reported back. The extent to which the coach emphasized and drew on the quarterly report in working with his/her sites was a key factor in whether staff found the information useful in the program improvement efforts.

• *Annual Surveys*

The results of annual surveys of collaborative members and school staff were reported to sites for use as a self-assessment of their functioning. The surveys covered such topics as collaborative processes, levels of trust, support for Healthy Start, and integration of services into the school.

• *Reports on Outcomes*

At the conclusion of the evaluation, the outcomes were reported for participating children and families for each site. Effective local initiatives used evidence of benefits to help marshal resources to sustain their efforts after the conclusion of their grants. These data were of keen interest to sites and were well received. The three years between the start-up of local initiatives and the site-specific answer to the key question, "Are we helping children and families?," however, was a long wait.

> Local evaluation "coaches" helped sites adapt the statewide evaluation activities to local needs.

• *Site Reports*

In addition to this reporting to local sites, all information on individual sites was also shared with the state-level partnership, composed of members of several state agencies and the foundation consortium. From these site reports, the state partners obtained a clearer understanding of the wide variation in local programs under the Healthy Start umbrella. Site reports also were used to help identify local collaboratives that might benefit from technical assistance or other support from the state's Healthy Start Field Office. The state partnership also succeeded in securing budgetary support for expanding Healthy Start to more sites as early evaluation findings gave indications of benefits for children and families.

• *Post-evaluation Guidebook*

After the conclusion of SRI's evaluation, CDE decided to develop an evaluation that could be carried out by the local sites and still provide comparable data that could be aggregated by CDE. Local sites did not have the capacity to sustain the amount and level of information gathered through the statewide evaluation, however. SRI worked with CDE and an advisory panel of local site representatives to create evaluation requirements that would produce information that was useful to each local site and also met the California legislature's need for comparable statewide data. Everyone agreed to have all sites report on a limited number of data items and have each site choose from a menu of outcome areas one small set of data items that best fit their local goals and services. SRI wrote a guidebook that provided clear instructions on how all data items were to be measured and reported to ensure the collection of comparable and reliable data. Measures reflected commonly used practices whenever possible. In the first year of the guidebook's use, more than 120 Healthy Start grantees used it to capture baseline and follow-up data on outcomes at the school, family, and individual levels.

Extensive time and resources were required to provide quarterly site-specific data to 65 local collaboratives, but this investment was worthwhile. With access to site-level reports and coaches who could translate the findings of those reports, local staff and collaborative members had information on the strengths of their efforts and areas in which their programs might need improvement. This effort laid the foundation for a data-driven improvement process that continues today. ◆

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Shari Golan
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Evaluation documents from SRI can be obtained by contacting SRI International, 333 Ravenswood Avenue, Menlo Park, CA 94025-3493, Tel: (415) 326-6200, Fax: (415) 326-5512.

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BEYOND BASIC TRAINING

Communities In Schools

The mission of Communities In Schools (CIS), formerly Cities In Schools, is to promote the connection between vital community resources and schools in order to help young people successfully learn, stay in school, and prepare for life. Local CIS programs do this by relocating community service providers into schools to work as personalized teams serving alongside teachers, principals, volunteers, and mentors. CIS provides training and technical assistance services to help states and communities to create and maintain local CIS programs and projects. CIS training focuses on a variety of topics including, how to build a CIS partnership; managing a CIS project site; and strategic planning. Follow-up technical assistance is provided by teams of specialists in specific areas of CIS operations. ◆

For further information contact Bonnie Nance Frazier, Director of Communications, Communities In Schools, Inc., 1199 N. Fairfax Street, Suite 300, Alexandria, VA 22314-1436. Tel: (703) 519-8999, Fax: (703) 519-7213. Information can also be found on CIS's Web site: www.cisnet.org

Preparing Effective Community Leaders Conference

Preparing Effective Community Leaders, Professionals, and Workers: The Third National Conference on Community Collaboration and Interprofessional Education, will be held November 5-7, in Kansas City, Missouri. Jointly sponsored by the National Interprofessional Educational and Training Network and the Together We Can Initiative, the conference will have a special focus on the work of the Local Investment Commission in Kansas City.

People who are interested in improving results for children, families, and communities through the creation of a newly skilled workforce are encouraged to attend. ◆

For more information contact the Human Services Policy Center at the University of Washington at (206) 685-7610 or by e-mail: marvlj@u.washington.edu.

EVALUATIONS TO WATCH

Evaluating New Jersey's School-Based Youth Services Program

In 1987, the New Jersey Department of Human Services created the School-Based Youth Services Program (SBYSP) with an allocation of $6 million. This funded the establishment of the first statewide initiative in the country to integrate a range of services for adolescents in one location at/or near schools. These projects began their first full year of operation in 1988, in 29 New Jersey communities in 22 local high schools, two regional high schools, and five vocational-technical schools. There is at least one project in every county of the state, and all students at host schools can participate in SBYSP activities. Each project is managed by a lead agency, and a 25 percent local resource match is needed to secure funding.

Core school-based services include individual and family counseling; primary and preventive health services (on site or through referral); employment counseling, training, and placement; drug and alcohol abuse counseling; and recreation. Local programs enjoy substantial flexibility in how they provide services and activities in response to local needs and resources. The desired impacts of the program include improved educational and health outcomes and better economic prospects for youth, as well as reduced need for more intensive (and expensive) services. The work of local projects is enhanced by a central support team in the state Department of Human Services that links projects to a network of local providers and additional resources; this team has played a critical role in the longevity and vitality of the SBYSP projects. ◆

Evaluation Design

Supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Academy for Educational Development (AED), a nonprofit educational evaluation and technical assistance organization, is conducting an evaluation of SBYSP that will run for three and one-half years.

Phase I: During the first phase of the evaluation, AED completed an analysis of SBYSP's evolving policy context. In addition, following visits to all sites and interviews with key project and school staff and youth, AED completed a cross-site analysis of project implementation. Data gathered during this phase were also used to articulate a theory of action in each program content-area and design a longitudinal study of student outcomes in six of the sites. SBYSP project directors helped develop both the theory of action and the outcome study design.

Phase II: During the second phase, AED is following the 1996-97 incoming ninth-grade cohort into its junior year (fall 1998) to measure outcomes for individual youth. This will entail periodic surveys of the entire cohort, review of SBYSP participation/utilization and school data, and case studies of "typical" youth at each site. The evaluators will compare SBYSP participants to nonparticipants with regard to a range of personal attitudes, situational stresses and assets, and behavioral outcomes in health, mental health, substance abuse, employment preparation, educational progress, and positive youth development.

Some of the challenges the evaluators face include:

• ***Understanding the dynamic relationship between services and outcomes in a multiservice program.***

In such programs, the total "package" of services and activities varies from student to student. This complex task is rendered more difficult by variations among sites. For example, health services in one site involve referrals to local providers and assistance with transportation and scheduling, while in another, physical and psychosocial screening is provided on site, reinforced by referral to a local provider, and in a third project, primary care services are provided on school grounds.

• Developing instruments that are comprehensive and sensitive, yet feasible to administer.

Measuring outcomes related to the full range of needs addressed and program services and activities constitutes a challenge endemic to the evaluation of multiservice, comprehensive, or service-integration projects. Previous researchers and evaluators of single-focus studies, upon which most of our current instrumentation is built, have been able to devote entire instruments to individual or subsets of outcome indicators. However, the length and complexity of the instruments used are constrained by the class period during which a survey can be administered, since it is very difficult to mount multiple survey administrations during regular class time in a single school year. To make effective use of limited time, it is critical to remain in close contact with the practitioners concerning evaluation priorities and to use their theory of action to inform the instrument and study design.

• Drawing comparisons that are sensitive to the factors that affect outcomes.

Given the degree of variation among the six case-study sites and the likelihood that SBYSP users have more severe problems than nonusers, simple comparisons between users and nonusers are inappropriate. Instead, AED is using key variables on the baseline survey to select those nonparticipants who resemble program users based on a broad set of characteristics, including demographic (gender, race/ethnicity); situational (family stress, outside sources of support); personal (depression, optimism, aspirations); and preexisting behavioral characteristics (community service, academic misbehavior). ◆

Constancia Warren
Senior Program Officer, Academy for Educational Development

Anita Baker
Senior Technical Consultant, Academy for Educational Development

For further information about the evaluation, please contact Constancia Warren, Senior Program Officer, Academy for Educational Development, 100 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011. Tel: (212) 243-1110, Fax: (212) 627-0307.

EVALUATIONS TO WATCH

Evaluation of an Extended Services School in Boston

With funding from the DeWitt Wallace Reader's Digest Foundation, a model extended services school is being developed at the Gardner Elementary School in the Allston-Brighton neighborhood of Boston. The Gardner is a K-5 school (550 children; 31 languages spoken) which buses 60 percent of its population from across Boston. The Gardner Extended Services School (GESS) is being adapted from the model of the Children's Aid Society Schools in New York and will focus on education and career development. It will extend the school day, link the school with community agencies, and respond to the needs of two generations. A partnership among Boston College, the Gardner School staff and parents, the local YMCA, and a community coalition (Healthy Boston) is coordinating the planning and eventual implementation of the GESS.

Evaluation Design

Two evaluations will be conducted. The *process* of implementing the GESS will be evaluated by the DeWitt Wallace Reader's Digest Foundation. The *effectiveness* of the GESS will be evaluated by George Madaus of the Boston College Center for the Study of Testing, Evaluation and Educational Policy.

The effectiveness evaluation reflects the Stufflebeam CIPP Model (consisting of Context, Input, Process, and Product evaluations) modified by adding strong naturalistic components. The time frame is five years and includes assessing longitudinally the inputs, processes, and outcomes of the project. The evaluation will include four phases. Each phase will examine the needs of the four target groups (children, parents, teachers, and community), the resources necessary to address those needs, the delivery of those resources to each of the four target groups, and the outcomes – intended and unintended – associated with the delivery of those services and resources. For each evaluation question, within each phase, a rationale is provided so that target groups and participants have a clear understanding of the nature and purpose of the evaluation. The phases are as follows:

(1) Early planning phase:

This phase will gather needs assessment/planning information on the four populations that are the focus of the GESS effort. It is anticipated that many unforeseen issues will arise at this early stage of the project, and part of the role of the evaluators will be to help project planners deal with emerging issues. In essence, this phase of the evaluation will be responsive to the needs of the planners.

(2) Initial project implementation phase:

This phase is designed to answer formative questions about early initiatives/plans/processes necessary to enable each of the four target groups to reach program goals. It will also take into account the issues faced by the planners who, at this point in the process, may not have a completely clear notion of which services are effective. Thus, the evaluation team will concentrate on providing information that will guide decision making about the participants' needs, the resources devoted to providing services, and the actual delivery of services.

(3) Full-scale project implementation phase:

This phase, which will last several years, is designed to collect ongoing quantitative and qualitative data on the four target groups. While it is expected that the project will be more clearly defined at this stage, this evaluation is intended to provide planners with the information necessary to meet ongoing decision-making needs.

(4) Impact assessment phase:

This phase is designed to give funders necessary information on outcomes – intended and unintended – so that the project services can be improved, extended, evaluated, and funded in the future.

In each phase, it was deemed necessary to identify the *stated* goals, inputs,

process, and outcomes of the project, and then, through a process of study and inference, to delineate the *actual* objectives, goals, inputs, process, and outcomes for each of the target populations. A significant effort was made to design evaluation questions that probed the perceptions of the four target groups on the stated and *de facto* goals, inputs, process, and outcomes of this project.

For each phase it is necessary to rely on both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection in order to obtain a richer, triangulated look at the questions within each of the phases. In choosing the variables for each population at each phase, the evaluators were guided by literature reviews on what seemed to work. They designed evaluation indices and data gathering methodologies around techniques known to maximize the richness of the information vis-à-vis the projected goals.

The long-term, continuous nature of this evaluation will provide project planners, managers, and partners with ongoing information about the program's strengths and weaknesses that can be used for program development and improvement. While the evaluation plan has provided specific details on a number of key aspects of the evaluation effort (e.g., data collection instruments, reporting plans, management plans, and budget) the evaluation has been designed to be flexible and responsive to issues that arise over the course of the project. As the project develops, additional issues not included in this proposal may arise and need to be addressed. Conversely, because issues deemed to be important at this time may eventually not be critical issues for evaluation, the program planners and their evaluation team will need to adjust and direct the evaluation as necessary. ◆

Mary Walsh
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George Madaus
Boisi Professor of Education and Public Policy, Graduate School of Education, Boston College

For further information on this evaluation, please contact Mary Walsh or George Madaus, Boston College Graduate School of Education, Campion Hall 309, Chestnut Hill, MA 02167. Tel: (617) 552-4710, Fax: (617) 552-1981.

SPOTLIGHT

Evaluating Communications Strategies: Learning From the Communications for Child Protection Project

Efforts to restructure human services and to enable communities to become more involved with child protection require the engagement of both the general public and policymakers. Many human-services related communications efforts suffer from a lack of careful design, however. Without a strong base in public opinion research and careful message testing and evaluation, one may settle for a message which attracts attention but has little impact on opinions or behavior.

> The Communications for Child Protection Project...is an effort to test a model of community-based communication that strengthens the linkage between public opinion and public policy.

The Communications for Child Protection Project, funded by the Stuart Foundations, is an effort to test a model of community-based communication that strengthens the linkage between public opinion and public policy. Findings from a study of the current state of media coverage show that sensationalized coverage of a few tragic events skews public and policymakers' understanding of the problems facing children and families as well as the translation of that understanding into action. The study also shows that the public is very concerned about protecting children. The Communications Project seeks to develop a communication strategy that does not just convey information or evoke emotional responses, but rather elicits changes in specific policy-relevant behavior. Examples of major project outcomes desired include agreement on an "umbrella message" for all participants to incorporate in their individual communications; the placement of tragic incidents in context of the broad scope of the problem; a shift in emphasis from sole responsibility of government agencies to inclusive responsibility of communities and families; a shift in the balance of expenditure from investigation to prevention; promotion of public/private partnerships; increased general public focus on child protection and prevention of abuse and neglect; and an understanding of the family and community factors involved in child abuse and neglect.

The major project interventions designed to achieve those outcomes are:

- *public opinion research to understand linkages among beliefs about what constitutes abuse/neglect, views about appropriate public or private intervention, and sources of information about such issues*
- *mutually reinforcing "umbrella messages" utilized by many public and private organizations*
- *a statewide media clearinghouse to provide information on child maltreatment and its causes that can be used by journalists when high profile maltreatment cases emerge*
- *communications training for child protection professionals to understand concise messages, the role of public opinion, and importance of multiple communication channels*

- *forums for journalists to provide an accurate picture of prevalence of and public attitudes toward child protection and insight into expert debates on policy and practice, and to discuss the impact of patterns of media coverage on public policy.*

The University of Washington's Human Services Policy Center (UW/HSPC) is conducting the public opinion research, message testing, and evaluation components; two nonprofit service delivery organizations will design and implement the community-based communications. This partnership allows UW/HSPC to maintain a role as evaluator, while taking advantage of the ongoing presence of the service delivery organizations in the pilot communities.

The evaluators will combine several different sources of data, a mixture of quantitative and qualitative analysis, and process and outcome evaluations.

Evaluation Methodology

This project intends to affect multiple audiences, ranging from concerned citizens to professionals who operate key child-serving agencies. The evaluators will combine several different sources of data, a mixture of quantitative and qualitative analysis, and process and outcome evaluations. The evaluation will also test innovations such as empaneling 30 respondents in each of the three pilot communities and providing them with Internet linkages. The evaluators will gather baseline data from general population telephone surveys, focus groups, and structured interviews with local opinion leaders and legislators representing a range of party affiliations and ideologies. These will help to determine the dynamics of public and policymaker opinions concerning child maltreatment and appropriate public or private intervention for child protection. These data will assist in the planning of communications interventions and will serve as a baseline for measuring impact.

Data from interviews with journalists, samples of reporting in major news venues, tracking of the numbers and types of information requests made of the clearinghouse, and reactions from community panels will be used to track changes in media coverage as a result of forums and clearinghouse information. Annual population surveys, structured interviews with civic leaders and policymakers, and responses from Internet panel respondents will reveal if public and policymaker opinions change as originally intended by selected messages, and whether there are observable changes in state or local public policy as a result of the communications effort.

Interviews with staff of operating partners will indicate how their capacity to communicate through media and such community-based methods as public speaking, posters, and presentations has changed. Indicators will include their reaction to training sessions and ongoing consultation, increases in their communication capacity (including an understanding of key concepts, a familiarity with media and other communication channels, and communications skills) and their technological capacity (fax machines, press lists, Internet access, and brochures). Samples of materials distributed by local leadership groups and by various participating organizations will be analyzed to see whether they incorporate "umbrella message" themes. A review of the sponsorship of media forums and attendance by reporters and editors of print and electronic media will help to determine whether they are reaching the intended audience.

The evaluators expect to publish baseline public opinion data in the fall of 1998 and the results of the initial outcome evaluation in the following year. ◆

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HARVARD FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT PUBLICATIONS

Results-Based Accountability

Resource Guide of Results-Based Accountability Efforts: Profiles of Selected States (Second Edition)
This update to our 1996 resource guide describes selected states' efforts to plan and develop results-based accountability (RBA) systems. Included for each state is a description of the design of the system, collaboration efforts, and applications of the system. Also included are key contacts and documentation.

Reaching Results Briefs

These short, user-friendly summaries are designed to highlight key concepts, issues, lessons learned, and best practices in the design and implementation of RBA systems for children and families. They are designed to provide summary information on important aspects of RBA for those responsible for the development of these new systems. Currently, our series includes briefs on an RBA system overview; developing strategic plans; and defining and using indicators in an RBA system. Additional briefs will be forthcoming. Call the HFRP publications department at (617) 496-4304 for order information.

Families Matter Series

HFRP announces the publication in late October 1997 of four new reports in its FAMILIES MATTER series. The series provides a training framework for family-centered child care and its application in community colleges and child care resource and referral agencies.

In December, HFRP will publish additional volumes in the FAMILIES MATTER series on the following topics:

- twelve child care programs and their family support practices, and how those practices contribute to a training framework
- family-focused training in two-year colleges
- resource and referral agencies and how they train programs in family support principles

HFRP will accept orders for the first four reports after October 15, 1997. Look for further publication announcements on our Web site.

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We regret that we cannot provide copies of the materials listed below. If you are interested in obtaining any of these resources, please contact the publisher or authoring organization directly.

Cibulka, James G., & Kritek, William J. (Eds.). (1996). *Coordination among schools, families, and communities: Prospects for educational reform.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
Improving coordination among schools, families, and communities poses many challenges. This book provides information on the diverse goals of the coordinated service movement and the problems of reconciling competing goals within the movement.

Denham, Carolyn & Etzioni, Amitai. (1997, March). *Community Schools.* Washington, DC: The Communitarian Network.
This paper presents a broad-based overview of community schools and defines the integral components which support such schools and the services that they provide for children and families. In addition, the paper describes why community schools and school-linked services are necessary, how such entities are best supported, as well as what steps should be taken to ensure the survival and growth of these community services.

Gestwicki, Carol. (1997). *Home, school and community relations: A guide to working with parents* (3rd edition). Albany, NY: Delmar Publishers.
This updated edition addresses the complex diversity of families and teaching situations that exist, sensitizing readers to the pressing needs of today's families and to the importance of involving them in the educational institution that cares for their children.

Illback, Robert J., Kalafat, John, & Sanders, Daniel (1997). Evaluating integrated service programs.

In Illback, Robert J., Cobb, Carolyn T., & Joseph, Herbert M. (Eds.). *Integrated services for children and families: Opportunities for psychological practice.* Washington, DC: APA Books.
The concept of integrated services represents an attempt to "re-engineer" the service delivery system in child welfare, child mental health, education, public health, juvenile justice, and related fields. This book highlights the historical, conceptual, and theoretical/empirical foundations; provides examples of the approach in a variety of practice settings; and considers issues of organizational change, training, program evaluation, and leadership. Special emphasis is placed on how psychologists can expand or enhance their practice based on these ideas.

John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. (1996). *Learning to collaborate: Lessons from school-college partnerships in the Excellence in Education Program.* Miami, Florida: Author.
This report summarizes the findings of a recent study of sixteen of the partnerships between higher education institutions and public schools which comprise the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation-funded Excellence in Education Program. Using examples from the projects studied, this report presents lessons learned in project design, implementation, and evaluation. The report concludes with a summary of the implications of the lessons. Appendices provide information on the projects, summarize the lessons, and chart the special topics and issues addressed by the projects in the report.

Kelley, Carolyn & Kahne, Joseph. (March, 1995). Designing effective school-linked service programs: Lessons from collaborative programs for children with disabilities. *Journal of School Leadership*, (5):163-182.
This article explores recent research on school- linked service programs for children with disabilities. Deriving much of their content from experience with such programs, the authors present findings on funding, parent involvement, and accountability issues and discuss the implications of such issues on the development and success of school-linked service programs for youth who are at-risk.

Lawson, Hal & Briar-Lawson, Katharine. (1997). *Connecting the dots: Progress toward the integration of school reform, school-linked services, parent involvement and community schools.* The Danforth Foundation and the Institute for Educational Renewal at Miami University.
In this monograph, the authors describe the relationship between school reform, school-linked services, parent involvement, and community school programs, based on observations from various schools and community outreach programs. The paper then offers examples of five different models of programs serving children and families in addition to crucial lessons learned from such initiatives. The authors emphasize the importance of integrating these services, or "connecting the dots," and conclude by proposing methods to support further integration, counter potential challenges, and facilitate development and evaluation.

Wagner, Mary, Fiester, Leila, Reisner, Elizabeth, Murphy, Dan, & Golan, Shari. (1997, forthcoming). *Making information work for you: A guide for collecting good information and using it to improve comprehensive strategies for children, families, and communities.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.
Good information is a valuable resource in facing the challenges of designing and implementing comprehensive strategies to improve results for children and families. This guidebook is intended to help partners in comprehensive strategies to generate good information as they try to remake services, organizations, systems, and communities. It offers principles, processes, and tools for using evaluation to focus comprehensive strategies on the shared goal of the partners – improving the lives of children and families. The guidebook

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employs a "theories of change" approach to setting out the goals of a comprehensive strategy, charting a course toward meeting them, and documenting short-range, interim, and longer-term results as partnerships pursue their strategies.

Zetlin, Andrea, Ramos, Cecilia, & Valdez, Arturo. (1996, April). Integrating services in a school-based center: An example of a school-community collaboration. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 24(2): 97-107. This is an account of how an inner-city elementary school established a school-based service integration center for supporting non-educational child and family needs that influence students' ability to function at school. ◆

Caroline Schaefer
Research Assistant, HFRP

IMMEDIATE JOB OPENING

Part-Time Newsletter Assistant for *The Evaluation Exchange* Newsletter

The Harvard Family Research Project, housed at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, is seeking a talented assistant to help produce a national newsletter on the evaluation of programs and policies for young children and their families. This position offers an unusual and challenging opportunity to be part of a team helping to chart the course of evaluation in the family support field. The Newsletter Assistant will provide outreach, research, writing, and editing for *The Evaluation Exchange* newsletter. Duties will include helping to organize and conduct evaluators' focus groups, assisting in the review of article submissions, commenting on articles, organizing a filing system for newsletter issues, writing correspondence, and conducting database searches. This is a part-time, casual position, approximately 17 hours per week, although there is a strong possibility of the job becoming full-time.

Experience/Skills: The ideal candidate will have research background, preferably with knowledge of evaluation and family support programs/policies. Strong writing skills are essential. Editorial experience very desirable. Must be highly organized and able to work independently.

Salary: Commensurate with experience.

To Apply: Please send a resume and a cover letter to: Tacy Corson, Associate Director for Administration, Harvard Family Research Project, 38 Concord Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138. No phone calls, faxes, or Internet replies please.

SPOTLIGHT

Reaching Results in Different Ways

Why aren't government child and family programs run more like private sector businesses? Why aren't bureaucrats held accountable for the performance of the programs that they oversee? How can state and local governments better engage citizens in working on solutions to problems facing families? Forthcoming publications from the Results-Based Accountability (RBA) Project at HFRP examine how eight states are tackling these important questions.

Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, and Vermont have actively participated in our RBA study, sharing their insights and lessons learned. These states have examined key issues facing their communities and have articulated a vision of where they want their state to be. They have developed goals and are tracking progress toward achieving these goals. These states represent very different models and different contexts, and each has important insights to share with others who are in the process of designing an RBA system.

Through in-depth interviews with over 200 individuals across the eight states, document reviews, and observations, HFRP staff have identified key issues in the successful design of RBA systems. A sample of these, which will be further described in our forthcoming publications, includes:

• Begin by engaging citizens in a strategic planning process.

This not only contributes to stakeholder buy-in, but provides a forum for civic engagement. Individuals participating in the planning process feel ownership of the issues identified and the solutions recommended to address problems.

• Develop strategies for effectively communicating results to different audiences.

The states and communities most effective in sustaining their RBA efforts have multiple publications that convey information to technical audiences and policymakers as well as to the public.

• Make RBA data useful to multiple audiences.

It is critical to demonstrate to individuals how they can use information for decision-making. In promoting a data-based approach to decision making, RBA systems have the potential to overwhelm users with information. Simply providing data can create frustration for people who do not quickly see how they can influence the problem. Therefore, it is important to give audience strategies to address concerns identified by RBA data.

• Link evaluations to RBA systems.

Having strong evaluation data in addition to RBA data can help to translate the data into information that can be useful. Evaluation data help to answer questions of why programs do or do not work and what action must be taken to improve results.

• Identify both who is responsible for achieving results and who has the authority to achieve the results.

This seemingly simple step is often overlooked. Frequently state agencies are held accountable for achieving results when they do not have the authority to influence the specific result. ◆

Diane Schilder
Project Manager, HFRP

The HFRP staff wishes to thank the many individuals who contributed to these insights. Current publications can be obtained by contacting our publications office at (617) 496-4304. By late 1997, we will be publishing additional RBA reports. For further information about the RBA project, contact Diane Schilder at (617) 495-9108.

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HFRP's Research Results: Teacher Preparation in Family Involvement

School-linked services are one of several educational reforms that recognize that schools cannot work in isolation from students' families and communities. Research shows that family involvement in children's education makes critical contributions to student achievement and can help to build relationships between schools and communities (Henderson & Berla, 1994). However, school efforts to promote family involvement will only succeed if teachers are adequately prepared to support these efforts. A new study by the Harvard Family Research Project examines both *why* training teachers to work successfully with families is so crucial and *how* to train teachers to work effectively with parents and families.

Findings from the study reveal a serious discrepancy between the preservice training teachers receive and the types of family involvement activities they are increasingly being expected to perform in schools. In many states, teacher certification requirements do not mention working with parents or families, indicating that family involvement is often not a high priority in state certification. The study's findings also show that in states where family involvement was mentioned in certification requirements, family involvement was rarely defined.

Teacher education programs, the study shows, also lack a comprehensive definition of family involvement. They tend to focus on traditional means of family involvement (such as parent-teacher conferences) rather than more innovative ways to establish parent-school partnerships. Fewer than half of the 60 teacher preparation programs examined in the study provided a full course on family involvement. Likewise, more family involvement training existed at the early childhood level than at all other levels. Findings indicate that the challenges to preparing teachers in family involvement include: the lack of an infrastructure to support model development and information dissemination; restrictive university and/or government policies; limited scale and resources of programs; and resistant attitudes from key actors.

The recommendations from the report focus on the development of the capacity of teacher education programs to create excellence in the field of family involvement. These recommendations include the following:

• Develop a national network to support teacher preparation in family involvement.

Ideally, this would entail the establishment of an entity that would model development and evaluation, work with professional organizations to develop standards, and disseminate information.

• Evaluate the experiences and outcomes of preparing teachers to work with families.

Efforts should be made at the school and district levels to assess and evaluate the family involvement practice of teachers and other school personnel.

• Strengthen state policy guidelines for teacher preparation in family involvement.

This would begin with a clear and comprehensive definition of family involvement that could be used to guide teacher education programs.

• Make family involvement training available to elementary, middle, and high school teachers.

This would help to address the finding that family involvement in schools declines dramatically with each passing grade.

• Improve the effectiveness of training through collaboration across subspecialties and disciplines.

This could include encouraging collaboration across teacher subspecialties and between education and the fields of health and social services.

• Integrate training throughout teacher education curriculum rather than treating it as an isolated component.

Integration of family involvement throughout the education curricula would both reinforce the importance of family and community in education and address concerns about excessive certification requirements.

• Espouse family involvement as a priority among professional organizations.

Resistance to family involvement might be lessened if professional organizations prioritize family involvement.

• Sustain teachers' knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes toward families through inservice training.

In order to sustain preservice efforts, professional development opportunities for teachers must be ongoing.

• Move beyond classroom-based teaching methods by offering teachers more direct field experiences working with families.

Teacher preparation programs that use interactive and experiential methods to help students to integrate theory and practice would help to build student skills and knowledge about working with families. ◆

Karen Horsch
Research Specialist, HFRP

The report on which this article is based, New Skills for New Schools: Preparing Teachers in Family Involvement, *will be available in Fall 1997. Contact the Publications Office at (617) 496-4304 for further information.*

Urban Education Web
http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/families

The Urban Education Web, run by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, is dedicated to urban students, their families, and the educators who serve them. This site offers manuals, brief articles, annotated bibliographies, and reviews of recent publications on family-school-community issues that are important to urban and minority families.

Pathways to School Improvement
http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/pathwayg.htm

This Web site, sponsored by the North Central Regional Education Lab, offers research-based information on school improvement. The Pathways site includes pages dedicated to parent and family involvement, assessment, children and youth at-risk, professional development, goals and standards, and governance/management.

California Healthy Start
http://goldmine.cde.ca.gov/cyfsbranch/lsp/hshome.htm

Started in 1991, the California Healthy Start Initiative brings schools, districts, health and human service agencies, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and private businesses together to develop the state's school-linked services. This Web site is sponsored by the California Department of Education and links visitors to Healthy Start resources in English and Spanish, gives a description of evaluation efforts, and provides directories of grant sites by year and region.

American Educational Research Association (AERA)
http://aera.net

With more than 20,000 members worldwide, AERA is the most prominent professional organization with the primary goal of advancing educational research and its practical application. This Web site provides background information about AERA, points of contact, membership, Special Interest Groups, publications, divisions, annual meetings, net resources, and a long list of job openings across the nation.

Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OERI

An office of the Department of Education, OERI provides national leadership for educational research and statistics. This Web site offers visitors information about OERI services, which include its library, multiple institutes and centers (e.g. National Institute of Early Childhood Development and Education, National Center for Education Statistics), and program-specific offices. ◆

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HARVARD FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT

THE EVALUATION EXCHANGE:

Emerging Strategies in Evaluating Child and Family Services

Volume III, Number 3/4 1997 — Free Quarterly Newsletter

From The Director's Desk

Those of us who have watched social services over the years know that fundamental and exciting changes are occurring. Decreasing confidence in top-down, one-size-fits-all solutions to persistent problems and increasing disengagement of people from services and one another are once again leading to a focus on communities – local solutions to local problems. The possibilities of this focus for our most troubled communities are tremendous, both in terms of the social and economic changes and of empowering people and reconnecting them with one another – what Robert Putnam calls civic engagement. Our challenge as evaluators, policymakers, practitioners, and funders is how we begin to document and examine community-based initiatives (CBIs) in a way that enables us to learn all we can about them. Evaluation of CBIs, like CBIs themselves, requires flexibility, the inclusion of many voices, a willingness to try new approaches, and a desire to share practices and experiences with one another.

This issue of the Evaluation Exchange carries on a discussion of CBIs that we began in our Winter 1996 issue. In that issue, we identified challenges that face people seeking to understand CBIs, promising methodologies for studying CBIs, and evaluation work currently underway.

In this issue, we continue to offer a variety of viewpoints, perspectives, and practices. Our "Theory and Practice" article summarizes practices, observations, and challenges in evaluating CBIs based on the comments of nine CBI evaluators. The three articles in our "Promising Practices" section each address different aspects of evaluating CBIs, reminding me, and hopefully others, of how many facets there are to our practice. Sharon Milligan and her colleagues examine the application of a theories of change approach to the Cleveland Community-Building Initiative. Joe Hall and Marianne Cocchini write about evaluation as a learning enterprise for a CBI. Tom Kingsley discusses the work that the Urban Institute is doing on the establishment and use of community-based indicators. In our "Questions and Answers" section, we speak with Mercer Sullivan about the use of ethnography in studying CBIs. We highlight an ongoing evaluation of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Youth Initiatives Program in our "Evaluations to Watch" section. In

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"Spotlight," HFRP researcher Louisa Lund summarizes findings from her recent paper on common themes in community development. Our "New and Noteworthy" and "Electronic Mailbox" identify publications and Web sites of interest. Finally, we have included an insert which provides information on other resources to assist those working on CBIs.

From the inception of this newsletter in 1995, we have sought to provide an interactive forum for exchanging ideas and practices among policymakers, practitioners, funders, and evaluators. I encourage readers to send us comments on the newsletter and suggestions about how we might strengthen it. I would like to thank all who have contributed their thoughts and writings to this issue. ◆

IMMEDIATE JOB OPENINGS

The Harvard Family Research Project is seeking two Project Managers to lead and manage national research initiatives. Both positions require a PhD, 5+ years experience (including qualitative research and project management), and strong writing skills. Positions report to the Director, supervise a team of researchers/consultants, write papers/grant proposals, and present research findings.

Project Manager for "Devolution Initiative Evaluation" project will conduct research and direct a multi-stage evaluation using qualitative and quantitative methods. Additional requirements: public policy and evaluation experience. Job #84492-E.

Project Manager for the "Building National Capacity for Family-School Partnerships" project will conduct research, including site visits and needs assessments, and provide technical assistance to national organizations. Additional requirements: school or educational non-profit experience. Job #84399-E.

To apply, please send a resume and a cover letter (including job # and salary requirements) to: Human Resources, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 118 Longfellow Hall, Appian Way, Cambridge, MA 02138. EOE. No phone calls, faxes or Internet replies please.

Evaluating CBIs: Facing the Challenges and Improving Practice

Interest in and support for local solutions to the nation's problems has grown tremendously in recent years. An alternative to fragmented, deficit-based, and top-down social and economic programs, community-based approaches offer the promise of more relevant, more integrated, and ultimately more sustainable programs.

The complexity, dynamism, and inclusiveness of community-based initiatives (CBIs) challenge both those who direct and staff them and those who study them.* Our Winter 1996 issue on CBIs discussed the challenges that executive directors face in meeting their own and funders' needs for information. The directors expressed concern about, among other things, identifying outcomes that can attend to the holistic approach of CBIs as well as the needs of multiple stakeholders, attributing results to initiative interventions, and building evaluation capacity so that they and their staff members can have information that is accessible, reliable, and timely.

This article discusses practices that evaluators of CBIs have used and lessons they have learned in addressing these challenges. HFRP solicited these insights in a set of focus group discussions with nine CBI evaluators. Their comments show that while much work remains to be done, there is a foundation of knowledge and experience upon which to build.

Identifying Outcomes

What outcomes are reasonable to expect from CBIs?

- *There are different categories of outcomes:* Evaluators point out that while specific outcomes vary by the nature of the initiative, it is important to be clear and realistic about both the level of outcomes to be achieved and the timeframe in which they are expected. Susan Stephens of the Center for Assessment and Policy Development noted three levels of outcomes: program outcomes which are directly related to the activities of a particular program; initiative-level outcomes which examine the extent to which the system is changing as a result of the initiative; and community-level outcomes which are the broader outcomes that take a long time to manifest themselves and which are often influenced by factors other than or in addition to the initiative. Stephens stressed that people frequently focus on community-level outcomes and are then frustrated by their inability to directly impact those; she suggests that to really understand what an initiative is doing, one needs to examine the initiative level.

What processes can be used to identify outcomes?

- *Facilitate a discussion of expectations:* An important first step in the process of identifying outcomes, evaluators point out, is clarifying stakeholders' expectations both for the initiative and the evaluation. This might include identifying evaluation questions as well as the outcomes that are desired. The evaluator often plays both a technical role, debriefing stakeholders about evaluation and providing guidance and structure to the study, as well as a facilitative role, helping others to discuss their viewpoints and reach consensus about their shared questions and expectations.
- *Examine outcomes that may have already been identified:* Evaluators note that in some cases, outcomes may have been identified during the planning for the initiative. Tom Burns of the OMG Center for Collaborative Learning points out that

*Many terms are used to describe the community-based approaches discussed in this article. For purposes of this article, the term "community-based initiatives" (CBIs) is used. The term "residents" refers to people living in the community. The term "staff" is used here to mean people holding positions in the service of management infrastructure, many of whom are often residents.

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what the evaluator works with really depends on the extent and quality of this early work – how clearly the initiative was defined and how clearly people examined and understood the assumptions underlying it. Where this has not been done, Burns points out, evaluators have to work with initiative designers and other stakeholders to develop an outcomes framework.

- *Start with expectations for community-level outcomes:* Often within the CBI there tends to be a generally shared view of what the long-term, community-based outcomes are, evaluators observe. These are the outcomes that often resonate most with key stakeholders. While these may take time to clarify and prioritize, evaluators note the importance of having a broad framework of outcomes to garner interest and focus subsequent discussions about outcomes.
- *Use intermediate outcomes to link activities with long-term results:* Evaluators caution that since CBIs are complex and desired changes take a long time to manifest themselves, intermediate outcomes are needed to show the progress toward ultimate outcomes and the more direct results of the initiative. Anne Kubisch, of Aspen Institute, notes that while stakeholders can generally agree on the long-term results they want to see and can identify the immediate results of their activities, it is this intermediate level of outcome that is often the most difficult to articulate. Evaluators stress the importance of showing a relationship between intermediate results and longer-term expectations. The theory of change approach has emerged as a promising means to do so (see the following).
- *Be sure outcomes link to on-the-ground activities:* It is important to examine whether the outcomes – especially intermediate outcomes – can reasonably be achieved by the initiative's activities. Evaluators note that in some cases, initial outcomes have been guided by expectations about activities that are different from those actually funded and implemented. In these cases, evaluators have a responsibility to point out incongruities and work with stakeholders to identify those outcomes expected to be achieved by extant programs.
- *Balance process and results:* Identifying outcomes is a time consuming process. While the process can be used to build interest in and support for the evaluation, Dale Blyth, from the Search Institute, points out that it is important that the process not be so prolonged as to consume all the resources and energy of the community and the tolerance of funders. He suggests that evaluators not be shy about presenting their own ideas for the community to use as a starting point. David Chavis of the Association for the Study and Development of Community, reinforces this point, noting that some program approaches have already been tested, and evaluators and others need to be more willing to look at past experience and share their own experiences with one another.

Determining Attribution

- *Is attribution the right question?:* In discussing the issue of attribution, several evaluators raised the issue of whether the open, broader community contexts of CBIs lend themselves to discussions of attribution in the traditional evaluation sense. They stress that for these relatively new endeavors, alternative ways of understanding whether CBIs "work" may be necessary.

What promise do experimental and quasi-experimental designs hold for CBI evaluation?

- *CBIs pose a challenge to these approaches:* CBIs, the evaluators noted, do not lend themselves easily to experimental or quasi-experimental designs for several reasons. One of the greatest challenges is that the magnitude of changes that are seen as a result of CBI interventions is often very small. Another issue is that of the unit of analysis. Designs for attribution are easier when data are collected at the individual level; they are more difficult at the level of community. Additionally, since the power of attributional designs derives from the number of cases, if the unit is communities, the number will typically be small. Another question evaluators raise is whether there are truly comparable communities that can be randomly or nonrandomly assigned. Many people think there are not. Evaluators additionally stress the often high cost of doing experiments and question whether it is right to withhold services from a specific population.
- *In some instances, these designs can be appropriate:* Evaluators acknowledge, however, that experimental and quasi-experimental designs are feasible, and may be required, in some cases. For example, since CBIs are multi-level phenomena, these designs may be able to examine changes at the individual level. Some argue that comparison groups of communities situated on similar variables can be created in some instances. Stan Schneider of Metis Associates points out that trend data can be useful in examining the history of a community's performance before an initiative has begun and after it has been implemented.

What other techniques exist to address concerns about attribution?

- *Combine multiple sources of evidence for a confluence of results:* Evaluators point out the importance of using multiple evidence and multiple tools to strengthen the case for attribution. This means melding qualitative and quantitative data and using different analytical techniques. While evaluators acknowledge that one can always find fault with evaluation designs and data collection instruments, the use of multiple valid and reliable techniques can strengthen arguments about program impacts.
- *Use a theory of change approach to show progress:* Theory of change is emerging as a promising approach to answer concerns about showing program progress and perhaps making attributional arguments. While a theory of change approach does not allow for identification of a particular causal mechanism in a fine sense, it can enable the evaluator and others to argue that the logic fell into place and that the initiative is "on track." It is important, evaluators point out, that in using a theory of change approach, one be careful about distinguishing between incorrect implementation and faulty theory.
- *Systematically examine other factors that might influence outcomes:* We are only beginning to understand how CBIs work and to recognize that other factors may influence outcomes. Rafael Valdivieso, of the Academy for Educational Development, uses a logic model approach to identify and monitor factors in addition to the initiative that may affect an outcome.
- *Document early outcomes that lead to de-*

sired long-term results: Evaluation plays an important role in helping people learn about and improve community-based program approaches. Anne Kubisch observed that there is a growing recognition of the complexity and risk inherent in CBIs and, as a result, many are investing earlier in evaluation. She notes that this investment can help in setting forth a theory of change for early initiatives and help document the processes and early outcomes that are expected to lead to desired long-term results.

Building Evaluation Capacity and Learning in a Community

What does local evaluation capacity mean?

- *Stakeholders need to learn to ask questions and gather data to answer them:* In discussing what is meant by building capacity for evaluation at the community-level, Stan Schneider noted that evaluators often have very high expectations for the evaluation activities that a community can technically and fiscally undertake. He suggests that a more realistic expectation may be that residents and staff members must learn to ask their questions and make sure that they obtain valid and reliable data to answer the questions, and move to the next set of questions. Cindy Sipe, of Public/Private Ventures, notes that, in her experience, staff members and residents need to be able to track implementation – what kinds of things are they putting in place, who is getting exposed to them, and what resources are expended – and be able to use that information to guide how they are implementing the initiative.

What is needed for capacity to be built?

- *"Consumers" need to be educated and interested:* In order for evaluation capacity to exist at the local level, evaluators stress, residents and staff members need to understand that evaluation is intended to be a tool that can help them to understand their initiatives better. They point out that within CBIs, there are people who are interested in evaluation and people who are not; it is important to locate and work with those who have an interest in it. Beverly Parsons, of InSites, has found "inquiry teams" to be useful in engaging stakeholders; these teams, composed of opinion leaders and others, have the responsibility to "inquire" about and reflect on the initiative.
- *Internal and external pressures are needed for evaluation information:* Evaluators note that pressures for information can also be the impetus for the development of local evaluation capacity. Susan Stephens identified three such pressures: demands for accountability from funders or state agencies; desire for information on the part of a champion or leader; and/or public demand for information. She noted that while the evaluator often cannot create these pressures, he/she can be aware of them and advise the community entities about how they can respond to these pressures in an ongoing fashion. Rafael Valdivieso agreed, stressing the importance of having outcomes become part of the community psyche, captured in the media and internalized by the public.

What can one do to help build capacity?

- *Link members to other evaluation resources:* The evaluator can help increase capacity by being a vehicle by which staff members and residents can link to resources in the community that can help them do evaluation-related tasks. These resources include universities, advocacy groups, and individuals working with data in organizations such as the police department and the school system.
- *Focus on data use first and then on data generation:* Evaluators stress that community residents, especially leaders, need first to know how to use the data to advocate for change and improve the initiative. Thus, the key is getting stakeholders to talk about the information and examine it for themselves. One approach, described by Beverly Parsons, is to orient a discussion around survey results. In her work with one group, Parsons asked stakeholders – prior to sharing the results with them – what they thought a survey might show. She then presented the actual data, which were not consistent with expectations, and used those data to promote discussion about and generate more interest in the data.
- *Encourage community participation in data collection and interpretation:* Evaluators note the importance of getting staff members and community residents involved in the data collection to help build ownership of the evaluation and evaluation skills. In many CBIs, residents are trained to conduct community surveys, neighborhood inventories, or ethnographic research. Evaluators caution, however, that community involvement should not be left at the data collection phase. Residents and staff members need to be engaged as well in framing the questions, interpreting the results and figuring out what needs to be done on the basis of the information.

  Evaluators point out as well that evaluation expertise is needed to ensure data quality. It takes expertise, for example, to develop good questions to be included on community surveys. Evaluators should also take on the boring work – such as finalizing the questionnaire, entering data into the computer – while residents and staff members get involved in the more interesting aspects of data collection and analysis.
- *Produce timely and useful reports:* Reports that are immediately useful and user-friendly are important to provide an incentive for communities to become actively engaged in the evaluation. Rather than presenting "final" reports with all the interpretations, Cindy Sipe urged that evaluators share the data earlier with stakeholders to help ensure that they are then used as the basis for discussion. She uses short memos and oral presentations to disseminate information that is then used as a basis for discussion. Dale Blyth stressed that appealing to multiple learning styles is crucial: a two-page, text format for people who like to read; graphs for the visually and numerically inclined; and stories to illustrate the points for those who learn best that way.
- *Build tools to help residents collect and use information:* Evaluators suggest that evaluators can help build interest in evaluation and the development of evaluation capacity by creating and disseminating toolkits. These might include, for example, tools around staff assessment and leadership training. From his work, David Chavis has learned the importance of high-quality meeting minutes for both program management and data collection purposes. He has developed a kit to help community members improve the quality of the meeting minutes they take.
- *Begin early and stay involved:* Essential to helping build local capacity, Tom Burns notes, is early and continuous engagement by the evaluator – from the point of iden-

tifying the questions, to collecting the data, to assisting stakeholders to interpret results. He notes that while such work is essential, it is also time consuming and can be costly, in financial and human resource terms, to both the evaluator and the stakeholders.

While these focus group discussions highlight the primary areas of concern in evaluating CBIs, they are only a beginning to an exploration of these topics. Knowledge about these will only grow as more CBI evaluations are conducted, new approaches are tried, and practices and lessons are shared among those working in this field. ◆

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The Evaluators

Dale Blyth: Director of Strategic Initiatives, Search Institute.

Tom Burns: Director, The OMG Center for Collaborative Learning.

David Chavis: President, Association for the Study and Development of Community.

Anne Kubisch: Director, Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families, Aspen Institute.

Beverly Anderson Parsons: Executive Director, InSites.

Stanley Schneider: Senior Research Associate and Executive Vice President, Metis Associates, Inc.

Cindy Sipe: Senior Policy Researcher, Public/Private Ventures.

Susan Stephens: Senior Policy Analyst, Center for Assessment and Policy Development.

Rafael Valdivieso: Vice President and Director of School and Community Services, Academy for Educational Development.

HFRP would like to thank those who contributed their experiences and insights.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Interview with Mercer Sullivan

Mercer Sullivan is Associate Professor of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University and Senior Research Fellow at the Vera Institute of Justice. He has worked and written extensively in the area of ethnography. We asked Dr. Sullivan to share with us insights and practices related to using ethnography to study community-based initiatives.

1) What does ethnography offer to the study of CBIs?

In the most general terms, ethnography is the best kind of research method to use for the purpose of exploring what the community element in CBIs is. Communities are not monolithic entities – there are different kinds of people in them and different social networks, even in seemingly homogenous groups – and understanding what is meant by community in practice is a notoriously difficult challenge. Ethnography, which grows out of the community studies traditions of anthropology and sociology, gives us a way to study community-level phenomena such as patterns of social networks, institutional infrastructure, the process of community change, and patterns of conflict and cooperation.

Ethnography is the best kind of research method to use for the purpose of exploring what the community element in CBIs is.

Traditional quantitative methods such as questionnaires and censuses can be used to gather information on communities and these methods can complement ethnography. However, it is difficult, in my opinion, to think about studying communities without going into them. You need to talk to the people in the community about the community and their lives in it.

It is important to recognize that ethnographic work is inductive. It is used for discovery and can help you to surface issues and questions about which you were not previously aware. If you already know the boxes that need to be filled in, you don't need ethnography.

2) What does one need to consider when incorporating ethnography into the evaluation of CBIs?

When thinking about how to use ethnography in studies of CBIs, several factors need to be considered:

- *The level of intensity:* Ethnography is an intensive and potentially expensive effort if done correctly. While you can spend some days at a site and get some information, to understand the social fabric in a community, you need a trained person who can spend several months to a year and a half there. This requires a lot of resources. While there are ways to do ethnography with people already involved in the CBI, they need training and have to be willing to commit the time necessary to write field notes, conduct interviews, and analyze the data.

- *The relationships:* Ethnographers form relationships with the people involved in the CBI and thus, there is a need to think about the match between the ethnographer and the people in the CBI. A good match between ethnographer and community is important for generating community commitment to the research process. A bad match does not mean a bad ethnographer or a bad community; there just may not be a match. The process of matching the ethnographer with the community can be difficult. Some assume that you have to match on race and ethnicity, but that is not always the case. The ethnographer's knowledge, past experience, and commitment are also very important.

- *The feedback mechanisms:* Ethnographers frequently struggle with the desire to "go native" (which can undercut the objectivity of their research) and the need to maintain distance (which can undercut rapport with a community's residents). One way you can clarify your role is to set up feedback mechanisms. Setting up a structure for communication between the you and stakeholders helps to make clear that you are not working for the CBI but at the same time are not detached from it. This structure should be set up in the beginning of the study and may be renegotiated throughout it. I recommend that regular meetings be set up but that these not be daily since this might put you in the position of providing day-to-day judgements of the effort.

3) How does ethnography fit with other approaches to evaluating CBIs?

Ethnography is frequently used to complement other research methods. One of the more common ways to integrate research traditions is to use ethnography on the front end to feed into the construction of quantitative measures. For example, an understanding of local experiences helps in designing surveys. It can work the other way as well. You might, for example, do a survey which shows broad patterns that the researcher just cannot figure out. The researcher can then go back into the field and ask the community's residents what they think the results mean.

There are, also, however, questions that really can only reasonably be looked at with one type of method. Questions of history, for example, cannot easily be done with a survey – qualitative methods are better for obtaining a historical profile of a community. Large quantitative surveys, on the other hand, can provide information on patterns that people may not even be aware of.

The best approach is to use a "tool bag" that includes qualitative and quantitative methods. These methods reinforce one another in both discovering and validating information. Using both approaches triangulates findings and increases confidence in them. As I mentioned earlier, the inductive nature of ethnography makes it tremendously helpful at the stage of data analysis – it can help the researcher to identify important questions and is an invaluable resource for interpretation.

4) What are the challenges in using ethnography to evaluate CBIs and how can these be addressed?

- *Gathering comparable information across sites:* In many cases, information on communities is not comparable across the sites in the study. The history of each community, for example, is unique. To address this challenge in the studies that I have conducted, I have tried to supervise and coordinate the activities of the ethnographers in each site such that the chances of getting comparable data are maximized. If I see that one story is emerging at a site, I try to see if there are similar stories or different stories about the same thing at the other sites.

We need to find ways to deal with the demands for judgements about CBI success while preserving the individuality of each community that make us think these are endeavors worth studying in the first place.

- *Identifying comparison sites:* Another challenge when evaluating community-based activities is the issue of comparison sites. Early on in the design of the evaluation, you need to think about whether you will look at a comparison site. As Hollister and Hill point out (*New approaches to evaluating community initiatives.* (1995). Washington, DC: Aspen Institute, pages 127-172), there are challenges to setting up even a quasi-experimental design. I have used a comparison site in one study. I used ethnography and quantitative methods to match sites. The ethnographic data came from interviews, expert opinion, and visual observation (such as housing stock). I complemented these data with census data on variables such as poverty levels, race, ethnicity, and housing type. However, due to resource constraints, I was not able to do a separate ethnography in the comparison sites. Thus, the qualitative information on the comparison sites had to come from the intervention sites.

- *Establishing credibility:* Ensuring that findings are credible, both internally and externally, is extremely challenging. Internal credibility is derived from the relationship that you have with people in the sites – do they believe that the information about their community is worthwhile? What might be missing? What distortions might exist? The issue of external credibility is very difficult. Although qualitative research can be laboriously and systematically executed, there is still skepticism about its credibility. It does not come with the same built-in scientific imprimatur as numeric results. This has to do, I think, with the fact that we are not used to seeing the same amount of qualitative research. If we did see more, people would begin to develop standards about what is good and credible. I think the answer is to support good work – the more good work that gets around, the more problems of external credibility will be reduced.

5) What final thoughts can you share regarding ethnography as an approach to evaluating CBIs?

I think there is perhaps a far more fundamental issue that faces those who study and evaluate CBIs. I would describe this issue as the contradiction between the reasons why people are interested in community interventions and their conceptions of the standards by which those interventions are to be judged. In other words, we are interested in community interventions out of a conviction that each community is a unique place and that local involvement will lead to local solutions to local problems. But when we go in to study these things, we work with the mindset of finding the generalizable – the successful essence of things – so we can bottle it and send it to other places. We need to find ways to deal with the demands for judgements about CBI success while preserving the individuality of each community that make us think these are endeavors worth studying in the first place. ◆

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Implementing a Theories of Change Evaluation in the Cleveland Community-Building Initiative*

Comprehensive community initiatives have proven difficult to evaluate because they do not lend themselves to traditional experimental methods. Many audiences, however, are interested in whether these efforts are actually creating change and improving the lives of residents. A theories of change approach offers promise as a means to address the constraints of traditional evaluation techniques.

A theories of change approach makes explicit the short- and long-term outcomes of an initiative, the strategies pursued to achieve them, and the linkages between these. By doing so, it offers several advantages over traditional experimental methods. First, it can be applied to whole community interventions in which untreated control groups are not possible. Second, it makes explicit many of the assumptions about the ingredients of community and system change and how these are expected to improve conditions for residents and their local institutions. Finally, by tracking progress on the steps in the change process, it can provide corrective feedback that can help distinguish theory failure from implementation failure.

The Cleveland Community Building Initiative (CCBI), in collaboration with the Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change, has begun the process of implementing a theories of change approach to evaluation. CCBI seeks to strengthen communities and reverse persistent poverty in four areas of Cleveland by supporting individualized approaches shaped by community members. Each of the four areas, or villages, has a council which is representative of various stakeholders and is charged with developing action plans to address poverty in the local neighborhood. Village coordinators work with the village councils to develop and maintain the councils and to provide technical assistance. The CCBI Board of Trustees is responsible for supporting villages and providing linkages to necessary financial, intellectual, and technical expertise to implement the village-based agendas. The CCBI executive director has responsibility for managing CCBI's overall operations.

The components of the CCBI evaluation include: articulation of the theories of change; identification of key benchmarks for strategies and outcomes; collection of data; analyses to determine whether the theories need to be refined; modification of theories as needed; and provision of regular feedback to stakeholders on progress and results. Little is currently known about the procedures that should be used in identifying theories of change and in selecting elements of the theories to track in the evaluation. Since CCBI now has experience with these two steps in the evaluation process, it is possible to describe the methods used, their results, and lessons learned.

A theories of change approach offers promise as a means to address the constraints of traditional evaluation techniques.

The CCBI evaluators used a four-step process to define CCBI's theories of change:

1) ***Determining key stakeholders whose theories need to be elicited:*** CCBI evaluators identified a number of key stakeholders who could help articulate the initiative's theories of change – the CCBI board and staff members, village councils and council coordinators, and the CCBI executive director.

2) ***Eliciting theories of change from these designated stakeholders:*** CCBI evaluators used various methods to help stakeholder groups to articulate the initiative's theory of change. Theory development began by soliciting the opinions of CCBI staff members through small group interviews; a separate interview with the executive director yielded his theory of change. The interviews consisted of a series of questions designed to elicit theories of change – beginning with conversation about short-term strategies and outcomes and then moving to intermediate and long-term outcomes. Evaluators diagramed these theories, solicited feedback, and made modifications.

The evaluators interviewed each board member separately to solicit his/her theory of change, including outcomes and accomplishments each viewed as important to CCBI, the specific activities each felt served as the means to achieve these, and the linkages or relationships among them. These individual theories were consolidated into one initial draft that was shared with the board and subsequently modified.

Focus groups were used to solicit the theories of change from each of the four village councils and where possible, evaluators tried to link the theory development process with the village's strategic planning process. Again, the theories were shared with the groups for refinement.

3) ***Examining the contributing stakeholders' theories for common and unique elements:*** Once the stakeholders' theories were developed, the CCBI evaluators had to compare and reconcile them. The evaluators incorporated the executive director's theory with those of the staff members – where common elements existed among the theories, no changes were made to the staff members' theories; strategies and outcomes suggested by the director but not included in the staff members' theories were added to the latter. The refined model was then shared with the staff members

* NOTE: While the term "theory of change" is typically used to identify the approach described herein, we use the term "theories of change" to acknowledge that multiple theories about the process of social change often operate.

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and the director, and further refinements made. A similar approach was used to reconcile the board members' theories, which again was shared with the members and further refined.

4) ***Agreeing on the theory or theories which will guide the evaluation:*** The next task was to compare the theories among stakeholder groups to develop one theory for the initiative. Evaluators found that the staff members' and board members' theories contained more similarities than differences. Furthermore, village councils' theories seemed to provide more detail to the theories of the other two stakeholder groups.

The CCBI evaluation is now moving toward evaluating the early parts of the theory since these now have sufficient detail and consensus. The evaluators recognized that there was a need to simplify the theory in order to identify benchmarks by which to assess progress. The simplification process consisted of grouping elements into major strategies and outcomes, each of which could then be further specified for evaluation. The evaluators identified numerous benchmarks for each strategy that would need to be reviewed by stakeholders so they would be aware of and agree upon these visible signs of progress. CCBI staff and evaluators are also beginning to consider the possible indicators that will be used to examine long-term outcomes of the initiative as well as identifying possible data sources.

In trying to operationalize the theories of change concept in a community setting, the CCBI evaluation offers these preliminary lessons:

- ***Evaluators must take on new roles:*** A theories of change approach thrusts evaluators into new, less traditional roles. In this evaluation, evaluators as well as CCBI staff members, board members, and village councils were all collaborators and co-discoverers. The evaluator is a trainer and a facilitator as well as a technical advisor.

- ***Stakeholders must be committed:*** Theory development is an iterative process and requires substantial time and energy if it is to work. The stakeholders in the CCBI evaluation made a substantial time commitment to work with the evaluators throughout the iterative process to define the assumptions underlying the initiative.

- ***Group processes work best in theory development:*** The use of a group process not only helps to build consensus and to yield a common theory, but it also allows group members to see each other's perspectives more clearly. The CCBI experience suggests that groups be smaller than eight persons.

- ***Being explicit about the detailed steps along the pathway of change is difficult:*** Many missing links exist between the early strategies and long-term outcomes. While stakeholders have a fairly clear vision of what they want to see in their communities, the steps that would be necessary to achieve these outcomes are not yet clear. The CCBI evaluators anticipate that once members and village residents experience success with initial action projects, they will be able to revisit the long-term outcomes and begin to make choices about the pre-conditions for change.

- ***The distinction between process and outcomes is difficult to apply:*** The early work of CCBI, as most community initiatives, involves putting processes and structures into place that stakeholders believe will build the community. Within the theory, these are identified as strategies, the accomplishment of which is an early outcome. This might be, for example, putting into place a recruitment process for village council members which contributes to village council formation and operation. CCBI evaluators have tried to phrase many of the processes in terms of short-term outcomes that could be observed at a point in time as signs that they are accomplished well.

- ***Establishing standards and thresholds is difficult:*** In the field of CBIs, values and goals are not stated as clear thresholds or levels. The experience of practitioners may be a useful source of a threshold for what works, but experience is not always codified or readily available to evaluators. A knowledge base in this area needs to be developed.

- ***To be compelling, models will need to be fully specified:*** Frequent feedback of findings and opportunities to modify the theory will prove useful for program improvement. This information should help provide staff and residents the evidence they need to distinguish between strategies that are incompletely implemented and strategies that were done according to the standards but did not produce the desired changes in the community. It is less clear how to build a compelling case that the theory itself is powerful and valid – as it now stands, the theory is not adequate to account for competing explanations and the influence of factors is not included in the model. In the early stages of the evaluation, where most of the predicted effects are internal to the initiative itself, this is not as problematic. The later community and individual-level changes that are predicted, however, are much less internally controlled. Therefore, there is a need to specify the model fully so that the influence of external factors can be ruled out or explicitly brought into the change process.

The CCBI evaluation is a work in progress. This early work has helped identify both the struggles and the opportunities that can derive from using a theories of change approach. While considerable work remains to be done to address important methodological concerns, the early experience of CCBI demonstrates that the collaborative, iterative process of developing, implementing, and refining theories of change is a good fit with the way that CBIs work. ◆

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ORGANIZATIONS OFFERING TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO CBIs

The following identifies organizations offering technical assistance in a variety of areas to community-based initiatives. This is not an exhaustive list, and identification here does not reflect endorsement by HFRP. *

Organization	Contact Information	Description	Type of Assistance
The Community Information Exchange	1029 Vermont Avenue N.W. Suite 710, Washington, DC 20005 tel: (202) 628-2981 fax: (202) 783-1485 http://www.comminfoexch.org	National, nonprofit information service, founded in 1983, that provides community-based organizations and their partners with information about strategies and resources they need to revitalize their communities successfully.	Assistance includes computerized databases (which include information on case studies, funders, publications, and TA providers), publications, research, training and technical assistance, and an inquiry service.
Consensus Organizing Institute	205 Portland Street Boston, MA 02114-1716 tel: (617) 723-4711 fax: (617) 723-4727 http://www.cpn.org/COI	National, nonprofit organization, founded in 1994, that draws upon people's creativity and initiative to fashion innovative solutions to community problems.	Provides analytical and strategic tools for use in identifying and developing community leaders, building community organizations, and developing and pursuing community agendas.
The Development Training Institute, Inc.	2510 St. Paul Street Baltimore, MD 02114-1716 tel: (410) 338-2512 fax: (410) 338-2751	National nonprofit organization, begun in 1982, that provides training and technical assistance necessary to make community-based development a strong and effective fixture of the American landscape.	Training programs in the areas of leadership and management, project development, and public policy development. Also provides customized training, technical assistance, and consulting on a variety of community-based development issues.
International City/County Management Association	777 North Capitol Street N.E. Suite 500 Washington, D.C. 20002-4201 tel: (202) 289-4262 fax: (202) 962-3681 http://www.icma.org	Nonprofit professional association, founded in 1914, whose mission is to enhance the quality of local government and to support and assist professional local administrators worldwide.	Provides training and technical assistance, publications, workshops, and an annual conference. The ICMA University offers comprehensive professional development programs. Community planning programs help local governments optimize their planning and development processes.

* We would be interested in learning about other organizations that provide such support to CBIs.

Organization	Contact Information	Description	Type of Assistance
Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation	1325 G Street N.W., Suite 800 Washington, D.C. 20005 tel: (202) 376-2400 fax: (202) 376-2600	Congressionally chartered, public nonprofit corporation established in 1978. Its mission includes the revitalization of declining low- and moderate-income communities.	NRC offers institutes and workshops with courses ranging from commercial and economic development to plumbing. Also trains new executive directors and conducts workshops for resident leaders.
Local Initiatives Support Corporation Community Building Initiative	733 Third Avenue 8th Floor New York, NY 10017 tel: (212) 455-9854 fax: (212) 682-5929	A national nonprofit community development intermediary that supports the social community development efforts of 40 CDCs located in 11 cities under a 3-year demonstration program called the Community Building Initiative.	Offers training on various community building strategies (i.e., community organizing, leadership development, health care, community security, community centers, etc.) and provides program development and strategic planning assistance to CDCs.
National Association for Community Leadership	200 S. Meridian Street, Suite 340 Indianapolis, IN 46225 tel: (317) 637-7408 fax: (317) 637-7413 http://www.communityleadership.org	A nonprofit organization founded in 1979 that seeks to strengthen and transform communities by enhancing the capacity of inclusive, community leadership development efforts.	Provides workshops, educational programs, as well as an annual conference. Also encourages leadership development through innovative programming, peer-to-peer networking, industry insight and resources, and staff access.
Program for Community Problem Solving (A division of the National Civic League)	915 15th Street N.W., Suite 600 Washington, D.C. 20005 tel: (202) 783-2961	Established in 1988; helps community leaders all over the U.S. enhance their abilities to "get things done" with collaborative decision-making tools.	Provides technical assistance in leadership development and collaborative process design for systems change, community building, planning, citizen participation, and problem solving.

Neighborhood Indicators and Community Initiatives

Evaluators have long desired better data on the neighborhood contexts in which the programs they are assessing operate. The trouble is that assembling adequate neighborhood data has normally been prohibitively expensive. In assessing a drug prevention program, for example, one cannot rely only on data on the changing pattern of neighborhood drug use. One needs to know about a host of other neighborhood level changes – social, economic, and even physical – that may have interacted to influence that pattern. Additionally, since one wants to know how the neighborhood changes along all specific dimensions, year by year, as the program intervention is underway, data from the last census are seldom good enough.

In the past few years, however, the prospects for obtaining more substantial neighborhood information have improved markedly. Most local administrative agencies have now automated their record-keeping, and with the advent of computer-based address-matching, it is no longer an arduous task to add up totals for neighborhoods, defined in many ways. Depending on the files assembled, one can create and frequently update neighborhood indicators from data on jobs, births, deaths, crimes, incidences of illness, student school performance, openings and closings of public assistance cases, housing-code violations, building construction and demolition, changes in property values and taxes, toxic emissions, and a number of other topics.

Local institutions in at least six cities now collect data on a regular basis from a number of different agencies and integrate them into a neighborhood-level information system (the Atlanta Project, the Boston Foundation's Boston Persistent Poverty Project, the Center for Urban Poverty and Social Change at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, the Piton Foundation in Denver, the Urban Strategies Council in Oakland, and the Providence Plan). Because they maintain such systems, these institutions can provide one-stop shopping which offers enormous efficiency for a variety of local users. They are non-governmental entities, not seen as being aligned to any short-term political interests, and they emphasize careful data cleaning, maintenance of confidentiality, and responsible data use. Accordingly, they are positioned to maintain the trust of data providers and users over the long term. Because of much reduced costs due to automation and the ability to raise funds through a mix of fee income and general support from local businesses and foundations, these organizations are – or have definite potential to become – locally self-sustaining.

Perhaps more noteworthy, however, is that these organizations do not see themselves only as data suppliers or traditional research institutions. Rather, their primary aim is democratizing information – getting information directly to neighborhood groups and other local stakeholders, and helping them use it themselves, rather than having the analysis done for them by outside professionals.

> In the past few years ... the prospects for obtaining more substantial neighborhood information have improved markedly.

In 1995, these six organizations formed a partnership with the Urban Institute to establish the National Neighborhood Indicators Project (NNIP). Funded by the Annie E. Casey and Rockefeller Foundations, NNIP activities currently include:

- Drawing on mutual experiences (and new field testing) to develop prototype approaches and tools for using information more effectively in community capacity building
- Finding innovative ways to use their data to support better local policymaking – for example, in designing local strategies to respond to welfare reform
- Assembling data from across their systems, and comparing patterns of change, to provide better insights as to what is actually happening to conditions in inner-city neighborhoods nationally in the 1990s
- Helping institutions in other cities develop similar systems and capacities for use.

The NNIP partners generally feel that the state of the art in using automated data in these ways is still in its infancy. Nonetheless, concrete applications in their cities have convinced them these approaches warrant further development.

The Atlanta Project, for example, has been working with several neighborhood groups over the past few years to prepare maps and tables showing parcel-level data on tax delinquency, code enforcement violations, and other property conditions. Just looking over the maps, community residents saw opportunities for action that they had not seen before. Their analyses became the basis for several initiatives: targeting assistance to elderly homeowners in jeopardy of losing their homes due to outstanding tax liens; selectively reinvesting in key community properties found to be ripe for redevelopment; working with city agencies to shift code enforcement strategies to crack down more effectively on absentee property owners with decaying and abandoned properties; and motivating the state legislature to pass new laws expediting foreclosure processes when communities are prepared to redevelop sites with nonprofit housing.

At the metropolitan level, another example is gaining national prominence. NNIP's partner in Cleveland (the Center for Urban Poverty and Social Change) began by working with automated data on welfare cases. Staff members examined the characteristics of different cohorts of county AFDC recipients and were able to

estimate and map by census tract, those recipients that would be imminently vulnerable to losing benefits under welfare-reform time limits. They also used geographic data on employment to analyze and map spatial patterns of recent entry-level job openings in the area. They found that the residential locations of vulnerable AFDC recipients were tightly concentrated in space, mostly in a few inner-Cleveland neighborhoods, while the entry-level employment opportunities likely to be relevant for these prospective job-seekers were largely in metropolitan fringe areas. They went further to estimate tract level income losses likely to occur under welfare reform and to calculate commute times that would be required for AFDC recipients to access various shares of new entry-level jobs.

These basic findings were not surprising, but the contrasts were striking, and the fact that the analysts had been able actually to quantify and map this "spatial mismatch" made a critical difference. The maps they produced (with associated hard numbers by neighborhood) cast powerfully memorable images. They captured the attention of the local media and, then, of policymakers. In response, the state has since allocated substantial funding for transportation assistance in Cleveland's welfare-to-work efforts, and local transportation planners are working with the analysis team to test out alternative strategies for getting vulnerable recipients to jobs more rapidly. The team has since begun assembling related neighborhood data (e.g., on the locations and capacities of day-care centers and job-linkage services, and the pattern of rental housing affordability).

Again, preliminary indications are that the production of solid data that can serve as a basis for sensible response strategies may well prove to be a critical step in motivating local actors to develop such strategies. ◆

G. Thomas Kingsley
Director of the Center for Public Finance and Housing
The Urban Institute

A full description of the project is provided in Democratizing information: First year report of the national neighborhood indicators project *(1996). Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 2100 M Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20037. Tel: (202) 857-8687.*

Learner-Centered Evaluation Practice: The Banana Kelly Experience

The Banana Kelly organization began in 1977, when thirty residents gathered to stop the demolition of their homes along the banana-curved block of Kelly Street in the South Bronx. Founded, owned, and governed by local people, the organization today employs over 100 full-time staff members (90% community residents) and operates programs in housing, economic development, and education. Projects include the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), school-based family support in three junior high schools, and a Banana Kelly Community Learning Center public high school. Last year, from over 800 nominations worldwide, the United Nations recognized Banana Kelly with one of six gold medal Best Practices awards for Improving the Living Environment.

Evaluation is an integral part of our work at Banana Kelly. While the funding sources of our programs are usually focused singularly on the success of a specific activity, our outcomes also include human, community, and organizational development. Thus, for our organization, evaluation involves not only program or even organization effectiveness, but also personal growth and development. In this model of evaluation, we learn how to design and operate good programs with our neighbors and learn how to innovate and excel as leaders by creating new knowledge.

We work closely with an evaluator who combines appreciative inquiry, assets-based assessment, and organizational learning strategies with qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods. She is simultaneously Teacher, Coach, and Mentor. She is a member of the Banana Kelly family, and a partner, but she remains outside the organization and its day-to-day work. By using evaluation techniques that are learner-centered (see box), she creates natural opportunities for us to learn.

For example, by welcoming people into the community through an appreciative entry process, the evaluator surfaces their skills, talents, dreams, best beliefs, and opinions of themselves, valuing from the start the "best of what is." This is critical, as it helps people to reassess past negative experiences with education and evaluation, while offering the possibility of learning as a tool for lifelong growth, community development, and new opportunities for meaningful work. By creating the incentive and space for individuals to raise and share their tacit knowledge and values with others, she enables us continually to create a common language and knowledge base. She captures the learning in our language and sends it back to us and others with a sense of authorship that moves us forward.

ELEMENTS OF A LEARNER-CENTERED EVALUATION PRACTICE

Providing an appreciative entry into a project or program: valuing who we are, what we bring to the program, and what we can learn from each other

Establishing an appreciative baseline from which to measure growth and chart change: creating an inventory of assets of the individuals involved; their knowledge, skills, and values; what gives life to the organization; and its work in the community

Learning through a developmental cycle of reflection, experimentation, and action

Holding learning meetings: including appreciative self-assessment, peer assessment, and program performance assessment

Designing learning inventories: what we know and how we know it and how we can transfer the knowledge to others

Conducting focus groups: bringing the whole system of stakeholders into the room

Surfacing our tacit operative assumptions: staying close to the "so what" of the project and what we mean by success, as the basis for building program propositions and hypotheses

Developing profiles in practice: case studies of a program in action

Documenting practice: capturing the lessons learned "in our own words"

Julio's experience, described below, is one example of this practice in action.

A Banana Kelly evaluation story

In 1991, Banana Kelly acquired a building from the City of New York and rehabilitated it with private funds. The success of this investment was defined by the outside funding source in terms of the following questions: How well is the building maintained? How efficiently are rents collected? How high or low is the vacancy rate? How much do the investors receive for tax credits? While these indicators are very important to the community and the tenants as well, they are only the point of departure for reaching the long lasting outcomes of community-building work, namely, human and organizational development.

Five years ago, Julio (not his real name) and his two children moved into this building. Julio had experienced homelessness and drug addiction, but was ready to make positive changes in his life. He was soon hired as a Community Trainer with Banana Kelly's Family and Community Enrichment (FACE) program, leaving a job downtown in the garment industry that paid a higher salary. He participated in a variety of interactions that are key to our evaluation model: focus groups; conversations in the hallway; asset-based program planning; reflection sessions; and the documentation and dissemination of ideas – in his own words, within and outside the community. Through these fora, Julio was introduced to external models and theories, methods, organizations, and practices that were applicable to his work.

The evaluator worked closely with Julio and others to identify their tacit knowledge about their practice, which helped integrate their personal development with community development. She pulled together for us the elements of our practice, clarifying the underlying logic of the model, which we then shared with a broad audience, from the local community, to Washington, D.C., to the U.N.

At the building's tenant association meetings and during the time that Julio was a member of the Banana Kelly advisory board, the evaluator listened and provided feedback on what Julio was learning and contributing in a community context. These early meetings allowed Julio to see that his ability to get other tenants involved was not simply his "personality" but a skills-set he had learned over time – and more importantly, through systematic, reflective evaluation practice – and was something he could teach others. He was encouraged to evaluate his projects and practice. He also began to seek new arenas and answers for his questions through classes, training, and workshops in HIV/AIDS education, financed by the organization's commitment to training and development.

Evaluation is as much a part of our daily practice – a core function of Banana Kelly – as housing management or economic development.

Julio soon gained access to many levels of the NYC HIV/AIDS community. He met people who introduced the possibility of Banana Kelly's operating a major demonstration grant in conjunction with university researchers. Julio's passion and leadership moved him beyond his role as a community trainer – he was now pushing the programmatic boundaries of Banana Kelly to include a community-building model for people living with HIV/AIDS. He pulled together a powerful team composed of professional and community-based staff members, outside consultants, and evaluators. His mission was to integrate the Banana Kelly model and learning practice into HIV/AIDS programming. He quickly identified the critical short-term outcomes for the demonstration programs and what Banana Kelly needed to learn to create an integrated service and development model for people living with AIDS. Using the evaluators' observations, data collection, and learning meetings and their frequent "discussions-on-the-run" to get into the real outcomes of the project – as well as identifying a strategic role for himself as project champion – Julio ensured the long-term success for AIDS programs at Banana Kelly.

Today, five years after the opening of Julio's building, we are still discussing and learning from that initial investment in our community – information that is unfortunately not often appreciated.

Our experience, the successes that we have seen in our programs, and the achievements of residents and staff members such as Julio, provide strong evidence that evaluation can move from a position of passive objectivity and aggressive accountability toward a much more rewarding, meaningful role in community-building. The artificial limits of traditional project evaluation are such that intended and unintended outcomes cannot be wholly documented, integrated, disseminated, and put to use across the organization or community – especially within the fertile learning areas found in "the life after" program funding.

We have made a large investment in evaluation, an investment that surprises many people. For us, evaluation is not a "frill" or a luxury. Evaluation is as much a part of our daily practice – a core function of Banana Kelly – as housing management or economic development. We could not succeed without it. ◆

Joe Hall
President/Chief Operating Office
Banana Kelly International

Marianne Cocchini
Founder
AER/MAC Consulting

Training Institutes: June 13-17, 1998
Orlando, Florida

Developing Local Systems of Care in a Managed Care Environment for Children and Adolescents with Serious Emotional Disturbances and their Families.

These institutes feature in-depth, practical information on how to develop, organize, and operate coordinated, community-based systems of care for children and their families, with a special emphasis on managed care. They are funded by the Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. For more information, contact the National Technical Assistance Center for Children' Mental Health at Georgetown University, 3307 M Street, NW., Suite 401, Washington, DC 20007 Tel: (202) 887-5000.

Evaluating the Kellogg Youth Initiative Partnerships

In 1987, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation made a long-term commitment to work with three geographic areas of Michigan to help improve the lives of young people. The 20-year Kellogg Youth Initiative Partnerships Program (KYIP) is designed to work in partnership with these three areas, to provide opportunities for each to develop and implement programs uniquely suited to the needs of its residents. In 1995, the Foundation Board adopted a Framework for the Future, which established positive youth development (rather than a deficit-based approach) as KYIP's guiding philosophy, set forth five broad goals, and laid out six strategies for achieving them.

The Foundation has contracted with the Academy for Educational Development (AED) to conduct an evaluation of the initiative in the remaining ten years. The evaluation will produce both formative and summative findings. AED's work with KYIP will pursue levels of analysis that speak to the sites, the Foundation, and broader audiences to illuminate how KYIP has experienced successes and encountered challenges over a number of years. The evaluation is being conducted in partnership with the Foundation and the three sites – including their foundation staff members, their Site Advisory Councils (SACs), service providers, and residents – and other KYIP collaborators.

The basis of the evaluation approach for KYIP has been the articulation of a theory of change. Working over several months, KYIP staff members, the SACs, and the evaluators articulated the theory of change for KYIP, including the longer- and shorter-term outcomes to be achieved, and the indicators used to track progress. The theory of change serves as the basis for the outcome, process, and context evaluations of KYIP.

•*Outcome Evaluation:* A relatively simple theory of change guides KYIP: If KYIP can create and sustain the conditions within a community that promote positive youth development, then increases in positive youth outcomes and decreases in problem behaviors are likely. In translating this theory into a usable program and evaluation model, KYIP staff, the SACs, and evaluators agreed to a set of 11 outcomes in four broad domains: youth, adult, organizational, and community. Outcomes related to adults (for example, those related to increased adult involvement and interest in youth) and organizational change (for example, functioning and collaborative organizations to serve youth) are considered early and intermediate outcomes, necessary to achieve longer-term youth and community outcomes. For each of these 11 outcomes, a set of indicators has been identified to monitor progress. Data for these indicators will be collected through: a community organizational survey; an adult survey; a youth survey; focus group discussions; and extant data analysis. Recognizing that identifying and using comparison communities is not feasible for this evaluation, AED is using a pre- and post-KYIP Framework evaluation design to assess KYIP sites' achievement of Framework goals.

•*Process Evaluation:* The process evaluation will examine the degree to which the strategies and scope of work described in the Framework for the Future and each site's strategic plans are actually comparable to what is reported and observed in the sites. Using data from surveys, site visits, meetings, and correspondence, evaluators will examine what is occurring at the sites. This will be helpful to the Foundation in monitoring the overall progress of the KYIP partnerships and can be used to identify and then address program-wide technical assistance needs.

•*Context Evaluation:* In addition to examining the implementation of KYIP and its outcomes, evaluators will also examine the context of the larger social and economic factors within which KYIP is operating to clarify the extent to which changes in outcome data are related to the initiative rather than other factors. This includes analysis of the demographic and socioeconomic factors that affect both participation in KYIP and its outcomes; unintended outcomes; and factors such as other public or private programs or economic fluctuations in a local industry or local economy that could affect KYIP outcomes.

Analysis of qualitative and quantitative data will occur at two levels. First, data will be interpreted at the site level within the context of each site's specific conditions. However, site-level analyses will not be conducted for comparative purposes. Analyses will also be conducted at the initiative level, serving the purpose of a cluster evaluation. These analyses will address the implementation and utility of the common framework and strategies of all three sites, as well as the suitability of the overall initiative to bring a new vision of youth development to the respective communities. ◆

Ricardo A. Millett
Director of Evaluation
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

NEW FROM HFRP PUBLICATIONS!

***Evaluating School-linked Services: Considerations and Best Practices*, by Karen Horsch. Nine evaluators of school-linked services programs identify considerations and best practices related to evaluating outcomes, sustainability, and collaboration to help determine how school-linked services programs work, what their impact is, and whether they should be expanded. Call (617) 496-4304 to order. [WP-5] 32 pages. $8.00**

Comprehensive Community Development and Family Support: An HFRP Report Highlights Central Themes and Common Ground

The well-being of individuals cannot be ensured separately from the well-being of families and communities. Many traditional government programs designed to remedy disadvantage, however, focus on individuals without regard to the communities or the families in which they live. In contrast to this piecemeal approach, the practice of comprehensive community development builds on the idea that neighborhoods are like ecosystems, interconnected so that the health of each part depends on the well-being of the whole. Comprehensive community development, rather than addressing problems as isolated phenomena, pursues three goals simultaneously: individual empowerment, neighborhood development, and political action.

Eight Themes in Comprehensive Community Development: An Annotated Bibliography, recently published by HFRP, reviews the current literature related to comprehensive community development, highlighting the potential for collaboration between family support and community development programs.

It presents an annotated bibliography of recent community-development and family-support resources and an overview of this literature organized according to the following eight core practices:

- ***Supporting families:*** Community-based family support programs focus on how good parenting can be facilitated or frustrated by the economic and social environments in which parents find themselves. In turn, family circumstances may determine the extent to which individuals can take advantages of opportunities that exist in their communities. Family support programs take a variety of forms in connection with other aspects of community development, from informal parenting groups to formal programs that aid families in difficulties; all of them, however, take a proactive, broad-based approach to helping families, emphasizing accessibility and partnership.

- ***Thinking in terms of assets:*** Asset-based community development draws upon and develops the strengths and resources of neighborhoods, families, and individuals. Focusing on using and developing assets encourages residents to set and pursue their own goals for community development and for their own lives. In practice, an assets-based approach could include activities ranging from making an inventory of already existing community resources to helping individuals, families, and neighborhoods develop their own capital, for example, in the form of savings for education or home ownership.

> Community development organizations which pursue a comprehensive approach must balance process ... with the need to produce visible short-term results

- ***Seeing the big picture:*** Although comprehensive community development, by definition, focuses on local projects, it benefits from an awareness of the larger context in which it works: the city, the country, even the world economy. This perspective allows communities to tailor their projects to suit economic conditions and possibilities and think about the ways in which their efforts might fit into a larger aim of improving whole cities.

- ***Working collaboratively:*** Working collaboratively means sharing expertise, talents, and resources in pursuit of a common goal. Collaboration can be an important tool in developing the wide range of services and opportunities for neighborhood residents that accord with a comprehensive view of community development. Collaborating organizations can concentrate on their own area(s) of expertise and conserve resources by avoiding duplication of services within a community.

- ***Balancing process and product:*** Community development organizations which pursue a comprehensive approach must balance process – the attempt to build community in ways which empower residents to sustain progress over the long term – with the need to produce visible short-term results, or product. Process involves planning, community organizing, and the development of collaborative, democratic, and accountable systems of governance. Product, in contrast, is represented concretely by newly built or renovated and well-managed buildings as well as other visible, successful events and programs, from expanded child care services to reclaimed parks.

- ***Building unity from diversity:*** Community development, by definition, grows out of an area in which people have something in common – at the least, residence in the same geographical area. It works by trying to transform this shared location into a stronger bond of shared goals and experiences. However, the emphasis on building connections need not imply an insistence on homogeneity. All communities are diverse in some way, whether through racial, ethnic, class, or age differences. Ignoring diversity risks excluding members of the community from the development process. Taking the claims of diversity seriously points to the importance of actively addressing the linguistic and cultural gulfs that may exist both within a community and between the community and the staff members that become involved in community development efforts.

- ***Drawing on multiple sources of funding:*** Practitioners of comprehensive community development typically construct a kind of mosaic of different sources of funding, including the federal government, state and local governments, local and national foundations, and corporations. While having diverse sources of funding may increase flexibility, cobbling together a budget from a wide range of sources makes fund raising a time-consuming and expensive activity.

- ***Focusing on youth:*** Community programs which focus on youth may take a number of forms, from employment and training to recreation. Such programs may aim not only to serve youth, but also to engage them as stakeholders in the process of governance and to realize their potential as assets for the community by involving them in community development efforts. The future of community development efforts rests on successfully cultivating leadership skills and commitment to the community in the next generation. ◆

Louisa Lund
Research Intern
HFRP

***Eight Themes in Comprehensive Community Development: An Annotated Bibliography*, is now available from HFRP publications. Contact the Publications Office at (617) 496-4304 to order. [Themes] 28 pages. $7.00**

Electronic Mailbox

Community Toolbox
http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/
The Community Toolbox is designed to promote community health and development by connecting people, ideas, and resources. The Web site includes tools (such as "how-to" materials; linkages to other information, people, funding and resources; exchange network for individuals to share experiences; and inspirational quotes to "help sustain work in communities"), information on publications, and the Technical Assistance and Community Documentation and Evaluation System.

The Best Practices Database
http://www.bestpractices.org
This searchable database, sponsored by The Together Foundation and United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, stores proven solutions to common urban problems facing communities throughout the world. Projects featured in the database address many issues of concern, including poverty, economic development, social services, housing and land use, and urban governance. Users can view summaries of innovative projects by geographic region or project initiative.

CINet
http://www.rprogress.org/program/cinet_progsum.html
The Community Indicators Network (CINet) of Redefining Progress (RP) is managing the RP-CINET listserve for CINet participants and others interested in designing, developing, or researching community indicators. The goal of RP-CINET is to provide a forum to link existing emerging community indicators projects, to exchange ideas and information in the field of community indicators, and collectively to support the growing number of community indicators initiatives in the United States and worldwide. RP-CINET is managed using Majordomo, an automated mailing list software. The list is closed and unmoderated. To subscribe, send a message to Majordomo@igc.org with the following message in the body of the text: subscribe rp-cinet. After your message is received, you will receive a welcome message explaining the RP-CINET protocol.

The Alliance for National Renewal
http://www.ncl.org/anr
The Alliance for National Renewal (ANR) connects people and organizations for community renewal. Their Web site works toward this goal by offering stories of community renewal on topics that include children, youth, and families, economic development, civic infrastructure, education, and community diversity. The site also offers an extensive list of resources for community builders.

The U.S. Census Bureau Data Access Tools
http://www.census.gov/main/www/access.html
The Census Bureau offers a series of user-friendly tools for extracting and displaying a wealth of information on communities across the United States. The interactive software on this site allows users to generate detailed maps with self-selected statistical information.

CIESIN U.S. Demography Home Page
http://www.ciesin.org/datasets/us-demog/us-demog-home.html
As part of an effort to support the efforts of decision makers, programs, scientists, and the public, this site provides simple access to demographic information across the United States. Users can link to national data sources, on-line supporting documentation, and methods or tools for extracting data.

CINet Web Page
http://www.rprogress.org
This Web page, produced by the Community Indicators Network of Redefining Progress, facilitates communication and information-sharing among community groups, professionals, and academics. A searchable database of over 100 community indicators projects will provide users with valuable project information on publications and upcoming events. ◆

Julia Coffman
Research Specialist
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We regret that we cannot provide copies of the materials listed below. If you are interested in obtaining any of these resources, please contact the publisher or authoring organization directly.

Dewar, Thomas. (1997). ***A guide to evaluating asset-based community development: Lessons, challenges, and opportunities. A community building workbook.*** **Evanston, IL: The Asset-Based Community Development Institute, Northwestern University.** This document provides guidance about how evaluation strategies can more actually improve the work of community builders. It identifies and clarifies the most important issues and dilemmas that come up in trying to evaluate community-building projects and suggests ten important principles for those wishing to implement evaluation strategies which are appropriate for this work.

Fulbright-Anderson, Karen, Kubisch, Anne C., and Connell, James P. (1997). ***New approaches to evaluating community initiatives, Volume II: Theory, measurement, and analysis.*** **Washington, DC: Aspen Institute.** This volume explores the contribution a theory of change approach to evaluation makes to the fields of community revitalization and human development. An introductory paper provides an overview of the approach, followed by a set of papers by evaluators describing their experiences carrying out a theory of change evaluation. Other papers discuss the challenges associated with measuring community change and with collecting community-level data and the problem of causality in complex community initiatives.

Redefining Progress. (1997) ***The community indicators handbook. Measuring progress toward healthy & sustainable communities.*** **San Francisco, CA: author.** This handbook aims to assist communities in developing new measures of their overall health and well-being. It presents communities with how-to's and resources for tailoring an indicator project to their specific needs. Appendices include a directory of indicator projects nationwide, sample menus of categories and indicators, and a collection of useful data sources and organizational resources.

Rogers, Susan. (1997). ***Engaging and empowering community and program staff in evaluation.*** **Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development.** This paper, used as a basis for a presentation at an evaluation forum entitled *Critical Issues in HIV Prevention Evaluation*, examines the issue of including staff and community members in evaluation. The paper discusses several ways of conducting evaluations as a context for discussing approaches to engaging and empowering community and program staff members, including utilization-focused evaluation, empowerment evaluation, and the HIV prevention collaborative institute.

Rossi, Peter H. (1998 forthcoming). Evaluating community development programs: Problems and prospects. In Ferguson, Ronald & Dickens, William. (Eds.) ***Community Development Programs.*** **Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute.** This chapter describes current evaluation research in the area of comprehensive community initiatives, including policy formation evaluation research, diagnostic program research, and impact and efficiency research. It includes a discussion of the issues that arise in evaluating community development programs, discusses the prospects for developing practical CDP evaluation procedures, and sets forth a series of topics for which further research is necessary. It criticizes current non-experimental impact assessment evaluations as being flawed and advocates for random experiments using communities as the unit of analysis. It also strongly supports the use of process evaluations for program improvement but not for impact assessment.

W.W. Kellogg Foundation. (1997). ***Evaluation Handbook for W.K. Kellogg Foundation Grantees.*** **Battle Creek, MI: author.** This handbook provides a framework for thinking about evaluation as a relevant and useful program tool. Part One presents an overview of the Foundation's philosophy and expectations for evaluation, a summary of the most important characteristics of the Foundation's evaluation approach, a review of the historical context of evaluation, and an overview of the Foundation's three levels of evaluation (project-level evaluation; cluster evaluation; and program and policymaking evaluation). Part Two provides a blueprint for planning, designing, and conducting project-level evaluation, using case study examples. To order a copy of the handbook, contact Collateral Management Company, (616) 964-0700. Ask for Item #1203.

Walsh, Joan. (1997 January). ***Stories of renewal: Community building and the future of urban America.*** **New York: The Rockefeller Foundation.** This report uses five case studies of community building projects to illustrate issues such as: engaging with government systems such as schools, welfare departments, and the criminal justice system; building local institutions; investing in outreach and organizing; involving the corporate sector; and developing new structures of governance and participation. The report highlights lessons about community-building, and includes a discussion of the importance of leadership and of facing racial issues constructively.

The Wingspread Journal. This journal is published quarterly by The Johnson Foundation. Each issue reports on one of the Foundation's four program priorities: enhancing learning productivity; developing civil and civic community; encouraging the involvement of adults in the lives of children and youth; and fostering sustainable community development. To receive a free subscription, call (414) 681-3351, fax: (414)681-3327, or e-mail: <wingsprd@execpc.com>. ◆

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HFRP announces the publication of the following new reports in its FAMILIES MATTER series, which provides a training framework for family-centered child care and its application in community colleges and child care resource and referral agencies.

• **Parent-Provider Partnerships.** 1998. M. Parker Anderson. This paper discusses how to work with children and families from diverse backgrounds, as well as some of the challenging issues raised by working with families having differing values, cultural norms, and experiences. [PROVFM] 23 pages. $7.00

• **Credentialing Caregivers.** 1998. Christiana Dean. This paper describes why family support is essential given current social and economic trends and stresses the need to bridge child care and family support. The author underscores the need for public-access family support training curricula that can be adapted to audiences of child care providers. [CREDFM] 25 pages. $7.00

• **The Parent Services Project.** 1998. Lisa Lee and Ethel Seiderman. The Parent Services Project (PSP) is a nationally recognized child care training program based on the beliefs that caring for children requires caring for families, and that family support strengthens both parents and the community. This paper outlines the history of PSP and summarizes PSP's main teaching points and training methodology. [SERVFM] 28 pages. $7.00

• **Transforming Training.** 1998. Gwen Morgan. This paper defines the characteristics of family support in the child care context, highlights research showing the need for provider training to raise the quality of programs, and discusses five vital topics for training child care providers in family support. One of the author's themes is the need to develop one cohesive training system for providers. [TRANSFM] 33 pages. $7.00

The above reports by Anderson, Dean, Lee & Seiderman, and Morgan may be purchased together for $20.00

• **Resource Guide for Family-Centered Child Care.** 1997. Saren Eyre. This guide offers ideas and resources for implementing family support principles in child care, and an annotated bibliography of up-to-date publications and training materials that child care providers can use to improve their efforts to support families. [RESFM] 27 pages. $4.50

Contact the HFRP Publications Office at (617) 496-4304 to order.

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